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WALKING AS KNOWING: AN INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS  
OF LEISURE IN THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF URBAN WALKING

BY

HEIDI LEE REIBLE

DISSERTATION

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Doctoral Committee:

Professor Laura L. Payne, Chair  
Professor William P. Stewart  
Associate Professor Carla A. Santos  
Professor Mark S. Micale

## ABSTRACT

This research probes the relevance of literature on walking and meaningfulness placed on walking by the walker, from viewpoints of history, literature, language, and the taken-for-granted life-world as inscribed in *Théorie de la Demarche* (Balzac, 1981), a 19<sup>th</sup> Century essay on walking and expressed in the first hand accounts of 21<sup>st</sup> Century New York City walkers from a lived experience perspective. This research sought to gain understanding of the perceptions of walkers who choose walking for its own sake even while in the contested pedestrian space of a densely populated, gridlocked, metropolitan area. Literary influences affected the way participants viewed the world while walking. Moments of sensory essences noticed by the participants while walking took the forms of embodied rhythm, stimulated senses, and mindful pace. These were conduits for gathering tangible connections to the past, to people, to place, and to time. Meaningfulness came from appropriating their time, memories, and independence in the midst of pressure to do otherwise. These meanings reinforced pride in their beliefs that walking set them apart from the stresses of the high volume intrusiveness of city living. Walking as voiced by the participants here, shows the lived experiential awareness as: reflexive, aesthetic articulation; transient, sensorial presence; and self-referential, epiphanic meaning. This research shows significance to practice in affecting remembering in such a way as to improve appreciation of mutually shared meanings and communication between practitioners and their constituents.

*To Joshua and Nathan, my heart*

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

...the extant walk, in my opinion, is the exact manifestation of thought and of life (Balzac, 1981, p. 274)<sup>1</sup>

This dissertation research explores meaningfulness in the phenomenon of leisurely, city walking from viewpoints of history, literature, language, and the taken-for-granted life-world as inscribed in a 19<sup>th</sup> Century essay<sup>2</sup> on walking in Paris by Honoré de Balzac, and expressed in the first hand accounts of 21<sup>st</sup> Century New York City walkers. Walking is concrete, rhythmic, and reflexive. It is worthy of study, as I consider it embodied movement embedded in the inter-subjective reality of the time-space of the everyday lived experience, and infused with the essence of life. The commonplace, everyday act of walking may act as a means through which one mediates perceptions of the self in time and leisure. In the modern city, stepping out the front door for a leisurely stroll exercises an individual perception that appears to scorn dominance of a culture of automobility and time scarcity. City walkers are ubiquitous, sidewalks and crosswalks packed with people, belying concerns that living conditions in urban areas leads to decreased physical activity which contributes to obesity (World Health Organization, WHO, 2012a). I suspect there is something profound in walking that leads toward inquiry to better understand the meaningfulness of lived experience.

The ideas for my project began several years ago after a close reading of Chris Rojek's (1997) article on Walter Benjamin's ideas on *flânerie* and the connection to leisure studies and leisure theory in a course on consumer culture. Following this was the discovery of a French essay by Honoré de Balzac in which he discusses his ideas about walking in Paris in 1833 and what can be known from observing a person's 'walk'. I quickly developed a passionate interest in the perceptive 'walk' of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century *flâneur* as holding potential for developing a rich

<sup>1</sup> ...la demarche étant, selon moi, le prodrome exact de la pensée et de la vie. Translation mine.

<sup>2</sup> Théorie de la demarche (1833).-A Theory of Walking. Translation mine

understanding of the humanness in leisure through the simple act of leisurely city walking. The ephemeral knowing attributed to this type of walking by Balzac, Benjamin, and Rojek resonated with my beliefs in the canonical ideals of leisure as a contemplative state imbued with individual meaning and necessary for the common good (Aristotle, 1941; Pieper, 1998), as well as the idea that meaning-making in leisure begins with the tacit act of being human. Further, I ascribe the phenomenon of lived experiential knowing to all fundamental thought in Leisure Studies and value exploring the past's influence on the present. These ideas and beliefs are foundational to my mental model of inquiry and serve to guide this project. I thought it paradoxical to consider that walking as knowing could occur in the city, often a contested space for pedestrian leisure. I began to wonder about walkers who just liked walking in the city for its own sake.

I suggest that there may be a valuable relationship between a contemplative state of leisure 'being' (such as that found in the slow pace of walking) and the modern hot-button topic in health and urban planning fields, namely walking and its relationship to well being. This project emphasizes the significance of practice as contextualizing and understanding lived experiential knowing and meaning in leisure as transcribed in writings on walking and as perceived in walking by the city walker both past and present.

### **Context: City Past and Present**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century metropolis, a passing, visual sketch of the landscape reveals the sidewalk, teeming with an omnipresent crowd of walkers. The expressionless marchers are perceptibly noteworthy appearing as asynchronous bobbing heads moving silently alongside each other against the frenetic horizon of busses and automobiles. Forced urgency drives their legs and quickening feet even as the depth and din of gridlock trivialize their presence. The crowd somehow seems insignificant and oblivious to the surroundings, even as each person



embeds and connects him or herself to it by the physical act of walking. Historically, walking was essential to urban life. “Today, however, the key role that walking plays is being eroded in many urban settings...restricted by obstacles and hostile conditions...suppressed in ‘unfriendly’ conditions and replaced by motorized transport...One of the main reasons is inadequate planning” (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD, 2012, p. 14). As a potentially delegitimized mode of travel in cities built at a scale relevant primarily to distance and speed, slow walking for pleasure or as a source of travel is ‘pedestrian’, and is only “a necessary adjunct to one’s car journey...engineered out of existence” (Vanderbilt, 2012, p. 2).

For many, the ‘city’ conjures up notions of crowds, gridlock, noise, crime, and suspicion. More people are living in cities, which adds to the challenges related to violence and safety, decreased space and increased pressures, physical inactivity and unhealthy diets. “For the first time in history, more than 50 percent of the world’s population lives in urban areas” (World Health Organization, WHO, 2012b). In the U.S., the urban population increase outpaced the overall growth rate between 2000 and 2010, 12.1 percent and 9.7 percent, respectively (census.gov, 2012). Walking continues to be the most commonly reported physical activity among U.S. adults, whether for leisure or transportation (Kruger, Ham, & Berrigan, 2008). In New York City, cyclist and pedestrian deaths rose 11 percent between 2011 and 2012 (Flegenheimer, 2012). Leisurely walking seems antithetical to the hustle and bustle of city life when considering the risks faced by the pedestrian or attributed to the urban environment.

The early-19<sup>th</sup> Century city, lacking speedier, mechanized transport, is by default a slower paced environment, nonetheless bustling and contested. Safety issues related to lack of sidewalks, sewage and mud, lack of lighting, muggers, and speeding, horse-drawn carriages still plagued the pedestrian (Papayanis, 2004). Evidence suggests that the walker was equally as

commonplace; respectable ones were male. Women and persons of color were suspect, judged by social mores, and limited by societal expectations. Artists and writers of that time made walking a significant theme by emphasizing its aesthetic potential, showing not just the leisurely stroller in a city such as Paris in the form of the *flâneur*<sup>3</sup>, but “include[ing] tourists, the well-to-do, working-class figures, and imperial guardsmen...reveal[ing] the reciprocal relationship between inhabitants and milieu” (Forgione, 2005, p. 665). This kind of walking would appear to stand contested in present space and time as seeming too time-consuming, too slow and outmoded in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century, driven metropolis. Yet, this anachronistic activity is part of the conversation among Leisure Studies researchers who often suggest walking as helpful in maintaining a healthy weight.

### **Context: Walking**

Walking is an oft unnoticed, taken-for-granted, seemingly meaningless human activity. In this ubiquity, we forget about nurturing this essential human act. In the declarative moment of stepping onto the sidewalk, leisurely walking seems out-of-time with the masses, and paradoxically sets the self into relief from the surrounding world. Eye, body, and mind each experience motion that raises one’s consciousness to the ephemeral “spatial and temporal character of the world flowing past the moving body” (Forgione, 2005, p. 665).

When one thinks of the types of walking done by the city dweller, the working commuter and the walking throng waiting on the corner to cross the street, risking the dangers of impatient drivers come to mind. This walker may get swept along by the crowd to quickly get to the subway or travel from place to place in a kind of purposeful, utilitarian, or peripatetic walk. Other city dwellers pay for membership access in order to walk on a treadmill in front of plate

<sup>3</sup> *flânerie* refers to the act of idle strolling while collecting social artifacts of metropolitan life. (Reible, 2007)

glass windows visible to sidewalk passersby in a kind of contrived type of walking, or they drive to the greenway with a \$150 pair of walking shoes to count the prescribed steps as evidence of privilege. I consider this a commoditized walk. There are streetwalkers and loiterers who exhibit a lurking, seditious type of walk. And there are the loiterers, homeless panhandlers walking and asking for money, persons of color with strange accents, as well as women walking alone after dark. This is a type of transgressive walking. There are slow walkers (usually tourists) and the badaud<sup>4</sup>. Balzac and Baudelaire considered walking in the city as optical gastronomy and *flâneurie*, respectively, with delicious tidbits of social essences noticed by the casual walker. As walking held prominence in their writings, I consider this literary walking. It seems that walking is proudly human yet pejoratively pedestrian in the large scale of the city environment. In a modern city, it is “an act dwelling in the margins, an almost hidden narrative running beneath the main vehicular text” (Vanderbilt, 2012, p. 2). In contextualizing the city, there is seemingly little to suggest it is an idyllic place for the kind of walking that could captivate the literary or transcendent imagination found in Balzac’s time or now.

Just so, philosophers, poets, critics, and scholars contextualize the pedestrian experience of walking in a way that implies significant personal and cultural meaning. Walking has been the romanticized, aestheticized, philosophized subject of poetry and prose, essays and social commentary. Rousseau, Wordsworth, Baudelaire, and Benjamin wrote about different kinds of walking that evoke the philosophical, poetic, historical, prophetic, or picturesque. For me walking is noticing the minutiae of embodied place and time: feeling a rhythmic gentleness in embodied time; sensing the air’s touch and the skin’s blush from exertion; seeing the artful curling wisps of winter clouds and green bushes red with ripe raspberries; noticing the designs of

<sup>4</sup> Gawker, rubberneck

a church's gothic spires and kaleidoscopic images from lighted shop windows; spotting the dynamic motifs of a dragon-shaped rainspout and repeating rows of terra cotta chimneys; smelling the aroma of baking bread; hearing playful sounds of children from a school yard; and sensing the exquisite touch of my leather shoe as it perambulates pavement. Or, maybe it is just being in the current of the coursing crowd.

To date, most Leisure Studies researchers quantify walking in an attempt to prescribe it for optimal health. Recommendations of 'steps per day' toward health permeate research reports, public health recommendations, and news media reports on obesity. In spite of that, obesity in America runs rampant. Consider that in the 'walk', one expands knowledge of the body in motion and the social world; the experience illuminates the world from within the self and through others. Being in the world is a way of knowing. There will be further discussion of types of walking in Chapter Two.

From these perspectives, I take a broadened view of walking, considering walking as an aesthetic, leisure experience involving action, emotion, attitudes, and responses. Viewing leisure walking as a present, perceived, aesthetic experience of embodiment and meaningfulness moves the Leisure Studies discipline beyond the consideration of walking as a quantitized product for consumption, prescription, or investment to one that embraces the human experience. What roles might 'meaning' and 'being' play in one's choice to walk, and how might they contribute to the Leisure Studies discipline in getting others to walk?

### **Context: Lived Experience**

Research on lived experience is complex. "[It] is neither an abstraction of a single leisure moment nor a post-hoc appraisal...[it] seeks to understand from many perspectives how a leisure experience emerged" (Parry & Johnson, 2007, p. 122). In this research project, I place emphasis

on the importance of the lived experience of the past in understanding the present experience of city walking. Leisure scholars have illusorily demonstrated ‘objective’ research methods by writing in third person, to set aside the humanness of the researcher (Dupuis, 1999). Lived experience is incomplete and partial at best when written from the point of view of the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In order to better reflect the lived experience, the researcher engages in relationships with the participants, him or herself, and the work (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This opens the door to researching lived experience that utilizes creative avenues that are more accessible to more people (Parry & Johnson, 2007). Phenomenology of literature and personal experience are the creative ways in which I explore the lived experience in this research.

Phenomenology seeks to understand what can be known and establishes the primacy of the experience of being in the world by the human subject him or herself (Schutz, 1962; D. Smith, 2003). I align with the assertions that the medium that serves to illuminate and bond historical literature, personal experience, and humanistic interpretation, as well as the perspectives of past-present, meaning cultures, and presence cultures is language (Gumbrecht, 2004a; Natanson, 1998). Language is a physical reality that can make the past present by way of ‘pointing’ to “objects and places that give a material presence to the past within the temporal present” (Gumbrecht, 2006, p. 324). I stand in the belief that lived experience, as expressed in literary or spoken language, is a basis for understanding meaningfulness in leisure walking as perceived by the walker.

The embodied experience-spoken/written/read/rewritten-helps to attribute meaning to what came before. “Through the historical analysis of human behavior we gain an understanding of what is unique to our time and what our time shares in common with earlier historical periods” (Rojek, 2005, p. 39). The give-and-take of the ‘talk’ and ‘text’ of expression, form a

layered hermeneutic that helps us understand what we do and what others do in everyday life. It is language that acts as a “medium through which the separation of humans and the (physical) things of their environment may be overcome” (Gumbrecht, 2006, p. 317). The sidewalk acts as palimpsest in the act of placing footsteps over the ones that have gone before. Utilizing concepts of literary theory and phenomenology expands knowledge of leisure meaning as gleaned from the literary imagination. There will be further discussion of these ideas in Chapter Two.

The data of words in language, are a primary external, shared medium, both spoken and written, that enable a researcher and participant to interpret and comprehend each other. For that reason, I propose a research project that takes a phenomenological methodological approach, from a historical-comparative perspective, to study meaningfulness in walking. I turn to a 19<sup>th</sup> Century text, *Théorie de la Demarche* (Balzac, 1981), and accounts of personal experiences of walking in New York City, to expand understanding that exposes humanness and meaningfulness relevant to Leisure Studies discourse in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### **Context of Walking: Leisure Studies**

Alarming, the prevalence of overweight and obesity among adults in the United States is increasing. Between 2000 and 2010 the obesity rate increased among adults from 30.5 percent to 35.7 percent (Healthy People 2020, DHS, 2010), a 17 percent increase. Television news reports and newspaper headlines highlighting the ‘obesity epidemic’ offer information, often from physicians and medical experts in public health and epidemiology fields, touting the benefits of walking for weight management and global health benefits. In the face of that information, it is surprising that over all the years between 1987 and 2000, only 21.1 percent of men and 19.6 percent of women participated in physical activity that met U. S. Department of

Health and Human Services recommendations<sup>5</sup> (Simpson et al., 2003). By 2008, the number of adults getting the recommended amount of physical activity per week decreased to 18.4 percent<sup>6</sup> (Physical Guidelines for Americans, DHS, 2008). In addition, between 1977 and 2001, the average rate of adherence to formal exercise programs remained at 50 percent (Morgan, 2001). Factors, such as the amount of time spent traveling by vehicle increasing from 45.7 minutes in 1983 to 78.5 minutes per day in 2004, a 72% increase (Polzin, 2006) and individuals watching 154.8 minutes of television on an average day (BLS, 2008), may have contributed to the problem. “Promotion of walking is a viable public health strategy to help adults meet physical activity guidelines and gain health benefits” (Berrigan & al, 2012, p. 595).

In an attempt to address these issues, formal national and international declarations, underscoring the need for a worldwide response to the public health concerns of obesity and individual participation in active living pursuits aim to increase the inclusion of daily bodily movement in the lives of all. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights-Article 24 (1948), Charter for Leisure (2000), and the International Charter for Walking (2006), are formal proclamations disseminated by the United Nations, the World Leisure and Recreation Association, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.K. Department for Transport and Living Streets, respectively. As the most commonly chosen leisure-time activity in the United States, (BLS, 2008; Brownson, Boehmer, & Luke, 2005; Simpson et al., 2003) it is no surprise that walking receives targeted consideration in the aforementioned decrees. Since nearly 80% of the total population of the United States lives in an urban area (Census, 2000) urban walkers are the subjects of inquiry in this project and face tangible, daily challenges.

<sup>5</sup> ☐ 30 minutes on ☐ 5 days per week

<sup>6</sup> 81.6% did not get the minimum 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week

This begs the question, what is missing for someone who walks ‘enough’<sup>7</sup> to get healthy then stops after a few weeks? What is the reason for the breakdown between reception of information and one’s choice to ‘move’? Perhaps a quantifying, authoritarian attitude to healthful leisure fails to resonate with individuals as this approach dehumanizes by reducing people to “a pound of flesh” and walking to minutes and miles. Leisure matters in being human.

Walking is my passion; this dissertation project is at its heart. Walking embodies an urban leisure space conducive to contemplation, to observation of the social milieu, to promotion of health and well-being, and to go out on a limb, transformation. Walking’s pace resists the inevitable dictates of speed in every day life and establishes presence to oneself and to time. Conceivably, giving emphasis to a standpoint that privileges the lived experience, personal perception, and perceived meaning in the ‘doing’ of walking may shed some light on issues and inform research and public health initiatives. This information illumines the pursuit of walking in the present, making it a timely issue for examination.

### **Overview of the Dissertation Project**

“Slow movement is of its own essence sublime<sup>8</sup>” (Balzac, 1981, p. 283)

**Purpose of the study.** I assert that the past matters to the present. Ideas regarding leisure, characterized as a contemplative state imbued with individual meaning and necessary for the common good (Aristotle, 1941; Pieper, 1998) held a key position in the establishment of canonical ideology and values in the discipline of Leisure Studies. Following Rojek (2005), I value a historical-comparative view of leisure, as it serves to teach us about current issues. I take the standpoint that a dynamic relationship exists between ideas from the past, as found in *Théorie de la demarche*, and meaning in walking as it relates to experience in the present, as told by

<sup>7</sup> as suggested for optimal health, i.e. donning a pedometer and walking 10,000 steps per day

<sup>8</sup> Le mouvement lent est essentiellement majestueux (p.283), translation mine



leisure walkers. Leisure is multi-dimensional. It participates in the play of meaning, it is embodied within a limitless variety of texts, and it is visible in multi-varied human, social, and cultural contexts. Understanding underscores all that is human and motivates interest in leisure research.

The goals of this study are three-fold:

One, expand the leisure literature by applying new perspectives to research on walking that consider understanding as “always on the way” (Gadamer, 1981, p. 105). In this human sense, I am always experiencing myself in the world, moving through time, and making sense of myself in varied contexts and relationships. Alfred Schutz’s phenomenological ‘lifeworld’ (Schutz, 1967a) and Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht’s literary typology, namely “meaning-culture” and “presence-culture” (Gumbrecht, 2006, p. 319) form the basic foundations for the study of walking in this mixed-methods project.

Two, translate<sup>9</sup> and contemplate the ontology of literature in an historical text on walking. The completed translation of the essay, *Théorie de la Démarche*, by Honoré de Balzac (1833), shall function as a channel to create ideas that form a comparative-historical viewpoint on city walking. Then, I shall overlay my interpretation of those ideas upon the context of the present-day pedestrian landscape by using those viewpoints to develop questions about walking.

Three, expand understanding of the person and the experience of walking in urban pedestrian culture by conducting semi-structured interviews with walkers in New York City using the questions I developed from the translation. Analysis of these interviews using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009) with a focus on exploring in detail how people make sense of their personal world, will shed light on the

<sup>9</sup> From French to English

performativity inherent in the humanness of urban leisure walking. Subsequently, they may reveal the relationship between walking and meaning, both relevant issues in 21<sup>st</sup> Century leisure.

**The problems.** Scholarly discourse published in recent decades expresses a concern regarding the trend toward loss of ‘meaning’ in everyday existence due to detrimental effects caused by the seductive pull of consumer culture (Bauman, 1990; de Certeau, 1984; Debord, 2006; Godbey, 1976; Rojek, 1997). The effect of a consumer society upon leisure is undeniable, “Leisure has become above all something to be consumed in the marketplace...in the consumer society sport and leisure are central to the commercial enterprise, being sold in their own right...” (Crichter, 2006, p. 281).

Normative coercion (Rojek, 1999) emanating from consumer culture presses the individual to accept the ‘fast track’ toward success through accumulation of goods and services. More things/experiences require more money, and hence, more work. Surprisingly, lived experience and its meaningfulness in leisure within the context of consumer culture are largely ignored as a research topic.

As schedules consume the day and desire for earning money fuels choices, time morphs into unbridled consumption that reifies the notion of leisure. Distorted by perceptions of time-scarcity, one’s ‘display’ in the form of gaudy acquirement, designer individualism, and a self-important feverish pace, acts as meaning. Walking may be a means through which one mediates perceptions of self, time, and leisure. Investigating the essence of meaning in a leisure experience ‘written’ over time on the urban landscape by the walker challenges blind acceptance of the consumer culture ‘rut’.

Also problematic in the Leisure Studies discipline is doxa that perpetuates covert agreement on the nature of history and leisure itself, such that it permits researchers and scholars to consider significant foundational ideas as relics of the past. Suggested here is the existence of a common, primarily undisputed understanding of history among leisure researchers and scholars as linear: the past is history; the present is progress. I find this narrow view of history problematic, as it easily allows researchers and scholars to take no notice of the possibility that a connection exists between foundational ideals of the field and current issues.

Equally problematic, is the current emphasis placed on the capacity of the built environment and other external factors to influence a person's desire to choose a physical activity such as walking (Handy, Boarnet, Ewing, & Killingsworth, 2002; C. Lee & Moudon, 2004; Rodriguez, Khattak, & Evenson, 2006; Suminski, Poston, Petosa, Stevens, & Katzenmoyer, 2005). Generally, persons in positions of power establish the importance of certain attributes and aesthetics of walkable environments. Researchers use quantified data to support utilitarian and functional reasons for walking. These dominate the research literature as the primary concern (i.e. to reduce obesity, to prevent heart disease, to develop social capital). Rarely are walking attributes, such as leisure as contemplation or pleasure, the focus of research.

A focus on building environments and structured programs that encourage walking sets walking apart from daily life. Most sites specifically built for walking require that a participant 'get there', most often by driving. Built urban walking trails and greenways are important and often require transporting oneself to them. Issues of proximity may actually deter their use. What about researching and developing strategies to increase walking by stepping out the front door and using the walkways closest to home, i.e. sidewalks? The view from the 'walk' and the experience of the walking body is equally if not more important in understanding the

environmental factors. It follows then that bi-pedal movement occurs in a slower-paced kind of time when compared to ‘automobility’ (Flink, 1977). The act of leisurely walking embodies the potential for an aesthetic experience in the moment of existence that raises consciousness of meaning, in moments of time, in everyday life.

The dearth of research literature on walking as a recreation or leisure activity in Leisure Studies is remarkable, particularly since walking is the most reported type of physical activity (BLS, 2008; Ham, Macera, & Lindley, 2005; Simpson et al., 2003). It is even suggested that researchers in Leisure Studies lag behind those in other disciplines in conducting and publishing research related to recreational and leisure time physical activity in the context of active living (Gobster, 2005). In addition, very little research data on walking emanates from qualitative paradigms or utilizes qualitative methods.

**The sub-problems.** Adding to the complexity of the problems of understanding meaning in leisure walking is:

- 1) The absence of a comparative and historical perspective for the urban walker in current research that embraces all domains-existential, instrumental, visual, and corporeal.
- 2) The failure to identify the aesthetic attributes and values associated with walking and their relationship to meaning in the context of the lived leisure experienced in ‘Pedestrian Culture’.
- 3) The existence of doxa in the Leisure Studies discipline that leaves imperatives of ‘Car Culture’ and ‘Consumer Culture’ unquestioned.

### **Overview: The Assumptions**

Arguable suppositions of the project include the following:

1) Walking, as the most frequently reported physical activity, is a highly relevant and important research area for Leisure Studies, particularly in regard to discerning what value-laden experience lies in leisure as anti-structure.

2) In light of the foci of research in the disciplines of medicine, public health, environmental psychology, and urban planning regarding the benefits of walking to health and well being, it is expedient that Leisure Studies academics, as exemplars of interdisciplinary research, conduct projects that draw on and contribute to them from perspectives that include both quantitative and qualitative paradigms.

3) Obesity is a primary health concern worldwide; it is incumbent upon Leisure Studies scholars as active citizens in the academy to take a leadership role in researching and identifying innovative and creative solutions to the problem.

### **The Research Questions**

When considering the multitude of reasons for an interest in walking among adults, how does operating on the premise that, ‘if we build it, they will come’ motivate sedentary bodies when we know very little about those who do walk? I suggest that stating people need education on healthful living misses the mark. If asked, most people already know that eating fruits and vegetables and exercising is good for them. What disconnects macro-level knowledge from micro-level accomplishment?

Perhaps the problem centers on ‘time’ and ‘meaning’, both potentially distorted by the normative coercion of consumer culture. Herein, scholars in the field may be complicit in contributing to that problem when a person must step out of the everyday by carving out time in

order to drive to a distant place to walk and then need special equipment (i.e. walking shoes or pedometer).

Anchored in phenomenological methodology, three main research questions guide this research project:

1. What can literature ‘do’ in the quest for knowledge of the lived experience of leisure?
2. How do meaning (mind) and presence (body) manifest in the individual experience of walking?
3. What is the lived experience of movement of the body in walking and perceptions of space and time?

Studying walking while standing in the tradition of phenomenological methodology provides the opportunity to research leisure from a perspective that includes humanness in the lived experience of leisure and increases the opportunity for understanding how meaning is situated in everyday life. The socio-historical, dialectical, and performative characteristics of ‘pedestrian’ leisure, if latently situated in 19<sup>th</sup> Century literature and mirrored in present pedestrian culture, may prove valuable in confirming that writing on walking effectively establishes a dialogue between past and present. To ‘walk’ suggests an experiential space conducive to contemplative leisure that enables one to know the ‘self’ in moments, to see a place anew, and to participate in community. Therefore, it is vital in an effort to begin answering the above questions to conduct research that attempts to determine who walks, who does not walk, the reasons for walking, and the essence of walking. Perhaps walking is a means within which to know meaning in leisure.

Whether considered as an end in itself or as significant to a healthful lifestyle, understanding the aesthetic meaning of walking in the day-to-day lived experience is foundational to both. City walking stands poised to translate the language of experience into leisure as meaning.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

Consider that to promenade, saunter, stroll, sashay, stride, wander, toddle, *démarche*, *dérive* or *flâner* is to ‘walk’. It is ordinary in its ubiquity, yet profound to human development. The importance of walking for good health is well established, as is its interest to writers and researchers alike. A substantial body of literature exists on walking. It is a topic for discussion in the areas of public health, medicine, literature, philosophy, urban planning, leisure, and recreation. Much of that literature takes an instrumental view of walking that focuses on research aimed at identifying personal or environmental elements for not walking or measurable health benefits from prescribed walking. In addition, current nationwide public health concerns have spawned a profusion of media attention on the ‘hot-button’ topic of obesity and its relationship to a sedentary lifestyle, as well as suggestions that walking is an accessible corrective strategy to decrease obesity. (Department of Health and Human Services, DHS, 2010). Lived experience that includes historical sensibilities, sensorial perceptions, and grounded essences that form the context of meaningfulness for a person who chooses leisurely city walking needs further study.

Most of the scholarly information on walking concentrates in the disciplines of Medicine, Kinesiology, Public Health, and Urban Planning from research perspectives of disease prevention/mitigation, movement effectiveness/improvement, health risks/benefits, and constraint/agency of the built environment, respectively. Leading researchers in the above named fields overwhelmingly tout the instrumental and functional benefits of activities such as walking, rather than essences of experience perceived by the person who walked. Research agendas often focused on the constraints and variables that affect a person’s decision to engage in walking, as well as attempted to find ways to get people to walk more either with programing or



improvements in the physical environment. I struggle with accepting a view of walking that uses concrete data to prescribe an absolute answer to combating inactivity and obesity, and as a tool to improve chronic health conditions.

This chapter includes a review of relevant literature that establishes the contextual framework for this dissertation project to include research and theoretical perspectives on walking, Leisure Studies, and lived experience.

### **Context: Walking**

**Kinds of walking.** Walking has been the topic of prose, literature, philosophy, poetry, and research. Balzac, Baudelaire, and Benjamin mark it's cultural, perceptual, and knowledge values (Balzac, 1978; Baudelaire, 1964; Benjamin, 1999; de Certeau, 1984; Debord, 1958).

Wordsworth, Willis, and Thoreau mark walking with the value as traveling creative process, for collecting a literary view of the city, and of sauntering in nature, respectively (Solnit, 2000; Thoreau, 1862; Willis, 1849). Still others are judged for walking against the grain by being in public spaces that do not belong to them (Nesci, 2001; Parsons, 2000; Solnit, 2000). Others write about city walking as representative of class and consumer culture (Willis, 1849).

When taken as a topic of scholarly inquiry, many researchers approach walking from scientific or technical perspectives concerned with the relationship of walking to disease recovery/mitigation strategies, constraints to participation, the influence of programs on adherence to physical exercise, health benefits, and characteristics of neighborhoods and the built environment on walking. Researchers primarily consider walking a tool, a means to an end, something to measure, or as something influenced positively or negatively by the built environment. When I think of walking in this project from the above perspectives and my own, I offer a brief description of four general 'kinds' of walking: peripatetic, transgressive,

commoditized, and reflexive.

*Peripatetic*. This kind of walking is often linked to the practices of the early Greek philosophers, who walked while lecturing. For my purposes here, I consider ‘peripatetic’ walking, in the literal sense, as that kind of walking that serves a purpose while getting from one place to another on foot. It may be practical, or purposeful. This kind of walk is less about pace and rhythm and more about process, and resulting habitual practice.

The pedestrian poetics of William Wordsworth (1770-1850), who used walking as a means of travel and as a fruitful activity to stimulate his thinking for writing, also fits here. Walking became a way of life for him, full of meaning and integral to his creative processes. He took walking out of the ‘garden’, which represented leisured privilege, to the road, where work and culture came together (Solnit, 2000). He walked extensively and had the time to do his work while walking.

Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) wrote a great deal about walking in nature. From his perspective, it was nature that the walker valued and understood. Modern improvements such as gardens, malls, and lawns encroach on the natural areas and limit the freedom of men. To him, “all good things are wild and free” (Thoreau, 1862, p. 669). His kind of walking intended to establish man’s spiritual connection to nature for the purpose of extolling the value of wilderness.

I choose here to expand this kind of walking to characterize the resident commuter who walks relatively short distances about the city on foot, the person who may walk several long blocks to work or walks to catch the bus or subway train. This may also include accomplishing other things-texting, planning, taking photographs, reading. In Wordsworth’s time, this kind of daily travel was belittled and was associated with the poor, as common. I suggest this judgment

continues today when held alongside “automobility” (Urry, 2004, p. 25). Many cities are engineered for cars, leaving pedestrians to fend for themselves (Vanderbilt, 2012). Nonetheless, in this kind of everyday walking, I acknowledge the opportunity for solace or aggravation, for praxis or poetics, for purpose or creativity.

*Transgressive.* Women and walkers who seem out of place (i.e. of ethnic or class dissimilarity) do not have a history of walking without prejudice and judgment. When women are in public, their walk is considered performance in the pursuit of attention (Solnit, 2000; Wolff, 1985). Women walking alone or after dark are suspected of being prostitutes. They are often intimidated and sexualized (Parsons, 2000).

Persons who do not seem to fit in portray a walk that belies rhetoric of the ideals of freedom and acceptance. “Black men nowadays<sup>10</sup> are seen as working-class women were a century ago: as a criminal category when in public” (Solnit, 2000, p. 242). Today it might be the person wearing a turban or hijab. The walk is tentative, is always looking over its shoulder hoping not to be seen or to stand out, and intending to portray confidence while resisting the pressure to retreat. This walking defies the risks of taking public space and claims a portion of public space even if it remains in the shadows.

*Commoditized.* Nathaniel Parker Willis (1806-1867) wrote about walking in London and New York over a period of several years chronicling the minute observations as a literary man of leisure. He ‘sketched’ with words the ordinary life of New York City inhabitants reflecting social values of the time and generating the interest of publishers (Willis, 1849). His kind of walking as a literary endeavor intending to present the city as “a spectacle, a panorama...the world’s foremost industrial consumer society” (Brand, 1991, p. 77).

<sup>10</sup> Referencing views from the 1980’s; today this may be someone who ‘looks’ Muslim

Here I also include the treadmill walkers. The influence of a medicalized exercise regime and consumer culture result in counting steps and buying the latest 150-dollar pair of shoes with matching jacket. This productive/performative walk belies walking's historical ideals. Hiking as time off from work and a means to rejuvenate industrial workers in the 1800's also held aesthetic value (Rybczynski, 1991). The treadmill walker is isolated from the environment, connected to the machine, and indentured to the gym enterprise. "The treadmill accommodate[s] a retreat from the world...the treadmill, not the walk, is the primary experience" (Solnit, 2000, p. 265). This is instrumental, laden with external pressure to reach specified goals, and the kind of walking we hear about most.

*Reflexive. Flâneurie* engenders the kind of walking I consider reflexive. It is the act of walking in such a way that the pace allows the one who strolls to observe and collect essences of social artifacts, of metropolitan life, of human sights, and of material culture. In the mid-nineteenth century, Paris transformed into a city of spectacle, glass, and light, and became the original city of *flâneurie*. This act of idle strolling through places of consumption in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Paris was not intentional exercise or goal oriented transportation.

Strolling represents the antithesis of automobility and places the *flâneur* in a position to perceive the sociological minutiae of the mundane crowd. To the *flâneur*, "the joy of watching is triumphant" (Baudelaire, 1964, p.69). In *flâneurie* there exists a wakeful, open stillness that potentiates disentanglement from day-to-day life and its bondage to work and consumption, thus challenging loss of meaning in the postmodern condition. The *flâneur* and *flâneurie* offer a reflexive viewpoint of existence to the seemingly forced expectations of the work-a-day world of the modern urban dweller (Rojek, 1997). The *flâneur* observes in a self-reflexive space of leisure. This kind of walking drives my interest in the lived experience of everyday walking as

worthy of study. I shall include further discussion of the historical context and relevance of *flânerie* to my research later in this chapter.

### **Context: Statistics & Research**

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than one-third of U.S. adults (35.7 percent) are obese and, at the current rate of increase, will reach 60 percent by 2030 (Ogden, Carroll, Kit, & Flegal, 2012). This seems antithetical to information on walking trends among U.S. adults that report an increase in prevalence rates of 55.7 percent in 2005 to 62 percent in 2010 and tout walking as the most frequently reported physical activity among adults in National Health Interview Surveys (Berrigan & al, 2012). In addition, between 2001 and 2009, walking at least 30 minutes a day increased from 7.2% to 8.0% (Pucher, Buehler, Merom, & Bauman, 2011). Recent CDC reports indicate that walkers are more likely to meet The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans (2008) of  $\geq 150$  minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week than non-walkers (Berrigan & al, 2012).

When I began the initial library database search for research articles on walking, I chose the search term ‘walking’ in the abstract and limited my search to articles in the subject areas of medicine, health professions, and social sciences in English. I further limited the search to articles with the keyword “human”. This search returned over 4,000 articles in a wide variety of journals. Journal source topics included gait and posture, biomechanics, physical and medical rehabilitation, sports and exercise, physical activity and health, and gerontology. None of the initial database search resource returns (SCOPUS, CSA, ISI) included articles from recognized leisure journals. It seems that researchers in Leisure Studies lag behind those in other disciplines in conducting and publishing research related to recreational and leisure physical activity in the context of walking and active living (Gobster, 2005).

To take the research literature query a step further, I chose to search a second time in top-tier leisure journals, one by one, for articles on walking published between 2007 and 2012. The journals searched included the Journal of Leisure Research, Leisure Sciences, Leisure Studies, and Leisure/*Loisir*, the predominant scholarly journals in the field. I again utilized the online University of Illinois Library Gateway and searched for journals with the keyword 'leisure'. I then used the word 'walking' to search in the above named journals, and I chose articles that included the word 'walking' in the abstract. I did not use stemming for the search. In this search, I located two articles in Leisure/*Loisir*, two in Leisure Studies, one in Leisure Sciences, and none in the Journal of Leisure Research published since 2007. A brief description of the research literature from all the above named disciplines follows.

### **Leisure & Recreation**

The dearth of literature on walking as a recreation or leisure activity is surprising particularly since walking is the most reported type of physical activity (Bureau of Labor Statistics, BLS, 2008; Simpson et al., 2003). Following are summaries of fourteen articles, published in recognized leisure studies journals<sup>11</sup> between 1992 and 2012 that included research and discussion on topics related to walking. Surveys/questionnaires and interviews dominated the type of data collection methods used in these research studies. Hiking and trail use dominated as the primary topics of study in extant Leisure Studies research literature.

As a discipline, leisure sciences' tie to walking includes research relevant to the active living agenda. This agenda focuses on researching the multiple factors, such as personal, social, environmental, and cultural, that present opportunities for and personal choices about integrating physical activity into daily living (Gobster, 2005; Godbey, L.L., Floyd, & Payne, 2005). Another study utilized questionnaire data to evaluate and determine the correlative relationships between

place attachment and involvement on perceptions of setting density (Kyle, Graefe, Manning, & Bacon, 2004).

A research article published in *Leisure Sciences* included walking in the research, only considered it as one of several possible choices of activity of park users. The researchers studied over 9,000 park users in Tampa, Florida and Chicago, Illinois (Floyd, Spengler, Maddock, Gobster, & Suau, 2008). They coded the activities observed as sedentary, walking, or vigorous. They concluded that unorganized activity, ethnicity, and lower neighborhood income were associated with walking in both cities.

Another article from *Leisure Studies* chose a focus on leisure meanings that asked about the way individuals gain knowledge about and give meaning to the phenomenon of leisure (Watkins, 2000). In that article, he suggests that the momentary meanings articulated within experienced leisure phenomena are valuable and that,

...the experientialist explanation of gaining knowledge about giving meaning to leisure, allows us to view individuals as bearers of different experiences rather than as behaviorist impersonators, bearers of mental representations, or individual or social actors. (Watkins, 2000, p. 104)

In the *Journal of Leisure Research*, Coble, et al conducted 20 semi-structured interviews with men and women between the ages of 20 and 50. They found that wilderness walking for solo hikers included the negotiation of fears and threats through the employment of strategies that included using protective aids or devices, increasing knowledge or skills, and utilizing a psychological approach (Coble, Selin, & Erickson, 2003). Other articles focusing on trails and paths near urban areas, existing or built away from traffic and noise, included discussions that point to local convenience, promotion, and collaboration as important factors in the provision of opportunities for recreational activities such as bicycling, skating, running, or walking (Dutton, 2005; Kay & Moxham, 1996; Robertson & Babic, 2009)

Gobster (2005) compared two research studies on trail use patterns in order to state the case that recreation and leisure research has the potential to inform and contribute to active living research. Experience perceptions related to emotion, beauty and satisfaction obtained from self-reports of 90 hikers demonstrate the dynamism of a recreation experience (Hull, Stewart, & Young, 1992). 'Walking' itself was secondary to the research concerns in this body of literature and served only as the mechanism of mobility (i.e. hiking), not as the primary topic of study.

Research articles in *Leisure/Loisir* centered on topics related to outdoor activities and constraints related to the choice to walk. Researchers in Winnipeg, Canada conducted surveys to gather information about perceived constraints on participant's use of the Trans Canada Trail for walking or hiking. The researchers found that perception of constraints varied among the participant groups-current participant, uninterested non-participant, potential participant, and ceasing participant (Lu & Campbell, 2008). In the second article, Latino men and women participated in an exploratory study that asked questions about leisure time physical activity (LTPA) and constraints to participation (Burk, Shinew, & Stodolska, 2011). They found that most participants walked 10 minutes per day and that constraints lowered LTPA.

Two research articles published in *Leisure Studies* studied physical activities in the natural environment, and only one actually used walking as a research focus. In a 2009 study in Croatia, researchers explored walking and hiking as a remedy to modernity (Roberson & Babic, 2009). They found that the experience of walking and/or hiking in the mountains mediated the time constraints and social demands of a busy life in modernity. The second article only mentioned walking in the abstract as an aside, only referring to walking as an identified recreation activity in Wales. The researchers actually studied politics and access to inland waters (Church & Ravenscroft, 2011).



## **Medicine and Disease**

There is a large body of available research on topics related to walking in literature from the areas of medicine and disease. The primary emphasis in the literature reviewed centered on prevention of chronic illnesses, mitigation of symptoms, and the significant health benefits of walking. Researchers often utilized surveys and questionnaires for data gathering.

Results associated with research on lifestyles that included physical activity, specifically walking, were reduction of type 2 diabetes, prevention of coronary heart disease, reduction in the risk of breast cancer, weight loss or maintenance, and increased overall general health (Dunton & Schneider, 2006; I.-M. Lee & Paffenbarger, 2001; Matthews et al., 2001; Parkkari et al., 2000; Tudor-Locke et al., 2004; Wyatt, Peters, Reed, Barry, & Hill, 2005). Clinical research in the field of nutrition even reported long-term benefits of walking on attenuation of weight gain in adults (Gordon-Larsen et al., 2009).

Dunton and Schnieder (2006) conducted research on barriers to walking. They studied 305 undergraduate students in 2003 ages 18-46 years of age from a California university. They developed a questionnaire to assess barriers specific to walking for the purposes of data collection. They reported that factor analysis revealed three primary factors that presented barriers to walking: appearance, footwear, and situational. Appearance barriers included concerns over perspiring and ruining nice clothes. Footwear barriers related to uncomfortable shoes. Situational barriers included lack of time, having a lot to carry and lack of sidewalks. In this case, intervention to increase levels of walking would focus on efforts to reduce appearance and situational barriers such as bringing a change of clothes or walking while on the phone (Dunton & Schneider, 2006).

A 2004 survey study gathering information on lifestyle factors (i.e. smoking, BMI) of an elderly cohort, found a significant systemic benefit realized from improved overall health from walking, in the form of reduced health costs and mitigating disease (Leigh, Hubert, & Romano, 2005). A focal point in the research included the attributes of walking for physical activity, since walking is an activity in which many already participated. However, they reported that only sustained levels ( $\geq$  two hours per week) of walking produced health benefits.

Regular walking on a golf course in a research study conducted on 55 healthy men aged 48-64 years was found to produce positive effects on their health and fitness (Parkkari et al., 2000). The benefits included decreased risk of coronary heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, and colon cancer. In another study, researchers used walking itself as an intervention, in a quasi-experimental research design, in order to test research hypotheses associating the physical environment and walking (Wells & Yang, 2008). They found that race and household size influenced an increase in walking more than neighborhood features.

Brownson et al (2005) found that an increase in participation in walking for health in rural communities was positively influenced through use of newsletters, social support, health provider counseling, and walking events. Construction of trails specifically designated as walking trails was found to be a factor in rural communities, as well as policy promotion effectiveness (Brownson et al., 2000). In Canada, neighborhood characteristics observed were positively associated with walking to work (Craig, Brownson, Cragg, & Dunn, 2002). They found that aesthetic and visual interest had a significant effect on the choice to walk to work and cited this as evidence of merit in the current trend for developing integrated communities.

A 2006 study examined use of the Irvine-Minnesota Inventory as an audit tool to measure built environment characteristics that positively influence active living, walking in particular

(Day, Boarnet, Alfonzo, & Forsyth, 2006). The overall findings supported the use of the inventory. Another instrument, the Neighborhood Physical Activity Questionnaire (NPAQ), a tool used to evaluate residential design codes impact on walking was found to be sufficiently reliable for use in future studies intended to examine environmental correlates of walking in a neighborhood (Giles-Corti et al., 2006). Following research in urban planning, researchers in the field of Preventive Medicine recommend research that links the built environment with physical activity. (Handy et al., 2002). Characteristics of the physical environment, particularly those related to safety and awareness of neighborhood destinations were found to increase walking by women (Suminski et al., 2005).

When considering ‘walking for pleasure’, it was found that the exercise intensity was greater for obese individuals and is sufficient to improve cardiovascular fitness due to the relative increase in cardiovascular stress from increased adiposity; this was not true for normal weight individuals (Hills, Byrne, Wearing, & Armstrong, 2006). Researchers from the Stanford University School of Medicine found that the action of physical activity on reduction of coronary heart disease was sufficient at 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity recommendation level (I.-M. Lee & Paffenbarger, 2001). Lifetime patterns of consistently high level of physical activity in adolescence and adulthood reduced risk of breast cancer in Chinese women (Matthews et al., 2001).

Van Dyck et al considered whether sedentary behaviors would be associated with multiple health problems. Their research with over 6000 adults who rated the walkability of neighborhoods found a negative relationship between activity-friendly neighborhoods and the amount of motorized transport (Van Dyck et al., 2012).

## **Kinesiology & Exercise Physiology**

The topics of research are very broad in this area and include walking as related to gait, quality of life, mechanics, mobility, environment, and programming. Cress et al (2006) conducted research to determine what key practices in the promotion of physical activity to increase quality of life were effective in programs for older adults. They identified five key practices: (1) a multidimensional activity program; (2) utilization of the principles of behavior change; (3) risk management; (4) having an emergency procedure plan in place; and (5) consistent monitoring of participants aerobic intensity.

When considering the mechanics of movement, researchers found that velocity influenced coordination and stability of arm and leg movements (Donker, Daffertshofer, & Beek, 2005). In another study, energy expenditure in walking was greater when the duration was continuous rather than intermittent (Fulton et al., 2001). Applied leg load had a greater effect on gait adaptation at the interlimb level (Haddad, van Emmerik, Whittlesey, & Hamill, 2006). Accelerometer data reliability varied depending on the type of physical activity (Hendelman, Miller, Baggett, Debold, & Freedson, 2000). Body, head, and eye movement data show differences in trajectory and locomotion in straight walking and turning corners (Imai, Moore, Raphan, & Cohen, 2001). Another study suggested that rehabilitation of impaired gait patterns in persons with multiple sclerosis may improved daily activity and decreased fatigue (Motl, Sandroff, Suh, & Sosnoff, 2012).

A number of the research articles centered on walking and the environment. Walkable neighborhoods in Canada were found to possess design elements supportive of the active living concept (Doyle-Baker, Sandalack, & Kolody, 2004). In another study, destination walking, such as walking to school, was found to have declined in favor of chauffeuring children. Active

commuting promotion strategies were suggested as interventions worthy of exploration in efforts to combat obesity in children (Tudor-Locke, Ainsworth, & Popkin, 2001). In another study, current walking levels were found to be very low even in the 'lean' state of Colorado as determined by self-reported activity level coupled with pedometer data (Wyatt et al., 2005).

Pedometer-determined physical activity data was determined to be helpful for quantifying guidelines in formulating healthy lifestyle indices such as the target value of 10,000 steps per day (Tudor-Locke & Bassett Jr., 2004). They suggested an adjustment of specific values for pedometer-determined indices related to desired outcome (i.e. BMI or blood pressure) when considering steps/day recommendations. They found that the 10,000 steps/day, commonly recommended by researchers and practitioners, is not a one-size-fits-all, sustainable goal (Tudor-Locke & Bassett Jr., 2004). University of New Hampshire researchers, in a study with 25 overweight, older women, found a reduced ability to support their body weight during walking due to decreased strength and force production of lower-extremity muscles (LaRoche & Kralian, 2011).

### **Public Health**

Walking is of great interest to public health officials since it is inexpensive, accessible, helps maintain healthy adult weight, and is well accepted (Nelson & Foltz, 2008). Health research focuses on the effects of a sedentary lifestyle on increasing rates of obesity and related illnesses and the potential for a program of regular walking to prevent or ameliorate disease (Cress et al., 2006; Merom et al., 2007; Tudor-Locke et al., 2004). Much of the research literature in this category also concerned issues related to rates of physical activity and environmental barriers or supports of that activity.

The Health Benefits of Active Transportation in New York City (2011) report suggests that

New Yorkers get more physical activity through brisk walking or biking to work than through recreation. The report promotes the health benefits of walking for transportation. The researchers indicated that physical activity contributes to one in eight deaths annually for persons aged 30 and older from cardiovascular disease, cancer, and diabetes, and that between 2005 and 2007 more physical activity, such as brisk walking for two and a half hours per week, lowered the risk of premature death by 20% (Dowell et al., 2011). The researchers report lowered rates of vehicular caused pedestrian deaths and pedestrian focused infrastructure improvements to address fears and positively remediate concerns about walking safety.

Researchers concerned with neighborhood variables and the positive perceptions of social and environmental supports (i.e. street lighting, available sidewalks) found a correlation with patterns of participation in walking (Addy et al., 2004). Attitudes and perceptions also play an important role in walking participation levels. A group of researchers found that those who walked fewer minutes per week held more negative perceptions of the environment than those who walked more and that environments perceived as attractive may influence time spent walking (Carnegie et al., 2002).

Others, searching for contributors to the overall long-term trends in rates of decline in physical activity in the United States, found a link to declining rates of walking for transportation (Brownson, Boehmer, et al., 2005). They identified trends according to type of physical activity: stable or increasing levels of leisure-time physical activity, declining work-related-transportation-in-home activity, and increasing sedentary activity. A group of Australian researchers used the Neighbourhood Environment Walkability Scale to gather survey data sampled from neighborhoods in Adelaide that was factor analyzed into categories labeled Aesthetic Environment and Practical Environment characteristics, both attribute categories that

were consistent with highly walkable neighborhoods (Leslie et al., 2005).

Data from the Neighbourhood Environment Walkability Scale was used to compare attributes of a low-walkable neighbourhood and a high-walkable neighbourhood. They found that residents of a high-walkable neighbourhood consistently rated relevant attributes of walkability higher (Leslie, et al., 2005). Development of social capital is significant in walkable neighborhoods as well (Leyden, 2003). In another study, a structured intervention in a neighborhood in Portland, Oregon, promoted strengthening of social networks and social capital which in turn promoted a healthier lifestyle (Semenza & Krishnasamy, 2006).

Other studies in the area of public health and exercise focus on implications for walking related to well-being and health. Subjective responses of group participants assigned to either a walking or stretching/toning condition in one study were found effect improved subjective responses of positive well-being, psychological distress, and fatigue (Jerome, McAuley, & Marquez, 2001). The First Step Program, a physical activity intervention for persons with diabetes, elicited profound changes in walking behavior that the researchers suggest led to improved long-term health outcomes (Tudor-Locke, et al., 2004). Researchers in Australia found that walking group participants who used pedometers to track the amount of walking they did as part of a self-help walking program increased their participation in other sports/recreation and were more likely than a control group (without pedometers) to meet physical activity recommendations (Merom et al., 2007). De Smedt et al found that a “10,000 Steps Ghent” program in Belgium was cost effective when considered an intervention that improved health as measured in a reduction related to diabetes and cardiovascular events (De Smedt, De Cocker, Annemans, De Bourdeaudhuij, & Cardon, 2012).

In another study conducted in a heavily populated urban environment, walking in public

easy-to-access green spaces near residential areas had a positive effect on the longevity of senior citizens in the megacity of Tokyo, Japan. In this study, proximity to the green space was a primary variable (Takano, Nadamura, & Watanabe, 2002). Other researchers found that adherence to a program of walking or jogging did not differ by baseline motivational readiness (i.e. psychological or behavioral readiness) (Young, King, Sheehan, & Stefanick, 2002).

### **Urban/Regional Planning-Environmental Psychology**

Due evidence suggests an obesity epidemic in the United States; this has drawn the attention of researchers and planners as well as those in health and medical fields. Urban planners focus on the ability of the built environment and trail systems in “Walkable Cities” to influence a person’s choice to participate in physical activity (Handy et al., 2002; Kim & Kaplan, 2004). The sedentary lifestyle of most adults requires intervention in order to get them to move away from the television. Searching for links that encourage adults to maintain sustainable physical activity regimes is also a primary focus in the literature. Many of the research questions centered on factors of the environment, natural or built, that impact ones desire to engage in and sustain a physical activity regime.

Urban planners conduct research on urban ‘livability’ as producing consequential positive effects on healthful, meaningful living through walking (Boer, Zheng, Overton, Ridgeway, & Cohen, 2007; Fleissig & Jacobsen, 2002; Handy, Cao, & Mokhtarian, 2006). Others tout the ability of the built environment and trail systems in “Walkable Cities” to influence a person’s choice to participate in physical activity in that features such as sidewalks, mixed land use, and proximity to walkways make it more likely that a person would walk (Handy et al., 2002; Kim & Kaplan, 2004; Yang, Roux, Auchincloss, Rodriguez, & Brown, 2011).



The built environment and pedestrianization are the primary interests of research in this area. Boer, et al (2007) conducted research on neighborhood design and walking in ten U.S. cities. They attempted to correlate neighborhood characteristics with the stimulation of walking behavior using the New Urbanism Smart Scorecard (Fleissig & Jacobsen, 2002). They found that neither block length nor high parking pressure<sup>12</sup> showed an effect on the choice to walk. They did find that areas with the highest number of four-way intersections were associated with more walking.

In the urban environment of Indianapolis, Indiana, factors that affect use of some trails and not others in greenway corridors were unclear (Lindsey, 1999). The authors suggest further research to expand understanding of trail and activity types in order to determine effective marketing strategies for development. The use of an analytical model from the discipline of artificial intelligence effectively identified measurable environment variables of pedestrian landscapes. Decision tree learning concepts were used to model the pedestrian reaction to those design variables (Naderi & Raman, 2005). They found that successful landscape designs incorporated features that engaged all five senses. Comparatively, researchers from St. Louis University found that walking as a chosen activity was lower in rural communities than in urban environments (Brownson, Hagood, et al., 2005).

Rodriguez et al (2006) utilized travel diary data as the basis in combination with survey data to compare New Urbanist neighborhoods physical activity levels with those in conventional suburbs in North Carolina. They found that measures of increasing physical activity of residents in the New Urbanist neighborhood showed little difference when compared to those in other suburban neighborhoods. They also noted that most of the residents living in the New Urbanist

<sup>12</sup> limited available parking

neighborhood walked in their neighborhood for utilitarian purposes, while residents of other suburban communities participated in more leisure walking (Rodriguez et al., 2006). Boer et al found that more people walked in neighborhoods with diverse characteristics and more four-way intersections (Boer et al., 2007).

Influences of social context and need for psychological restoration were studied as related to one's preference for natural or urban environments. Researchers from Sweden and the Netherlands examined the influence of social context on walking (Staats, 2004). They found that safety in the urban environment and company in the natural environment were determinants for feeling restored during a walk. In an unusual project, participants learned to reliably identify target walkers by their unique gait signature rather than by means of face recognition.

Implications for usefulness may occur in situations where the face is obscured (Stevenage, Nixon, & Vince, 1999).

A social-ecological model of walking offers a means to determine the hierarchy of walking needs necessary to understand the decision-making process affecting physical activity behaviors (Alfonzo, 2005). Accessibility, safety, comfort, pleasurability are needs that affect the decision to walk. The hope of this model lies in its potential to lend clarity to factors associated with the built environment and a decline in walking rates in recognition of the importance of safety and its impact on walking. Spending allocations for infrastructure to support pedestrian and bicycle pathways in urban areas do not meet needs of those who walk (Dickenson, 1996). The need for safe pedestrian transportation due to the changing age structure of the population is creating awareness and change in New York.

In another study, the authors suggest that self-selection plays a role in affecting the successes of environments that facilitate walking. Implications for further inquiry must

concentrate on the causal relationship between increased walking behavior and the built environment adding in the factors and characteristics of influence possessed by the residents who choose to live in walkable neighborhoods (Handy et al., 2006).

### **Context: Theoretical and Epistemological**

**Constraints theory.** A great deal of the conversations in the research I reviewed earlier in this chapter focuses on identifying contributing factors affecting decreased walking rates, reasons for failure to adhere to walking programs, the detrimental impact from one's physical inability to walk, and strategies to increase walking and approach from either identification of barriers or strategies to mitigate them (Alfonzo, 2005; Burk et al., 2011; Carnegie et al., 2002; Coble et al., 2003; Handy et al., 2002; LaRoche & Kralian, 2011; Lu & Campbell, 2008; Roberson & Babic, 2009; Semenza & Krishnasamy, 2006; Staats, 2004; Tudor-Locke & Bassett Jr., 2004; Van Dyck et al., 2012). Identified barriers are limits or deficiencies of the built environment, personal and physical reasons perceived or actual, lack of social support, fear, skill incongruence, and accessibility to name a few. I consider these issues directly or indirectly as forms of constraint.

Constraints theory arose in the early 1990's as an alternative way to think about negotiating barriers to leisure participation that were previously believed to be overwhelming. Crawford & Godbey (1987) and Crawford, Jackson, & Godbey (1991) suggested that barriers to leisure are hierarchical. They introduced three principal components-intrapersonal constraints, interpersonal constraints, and structural constraints-as integrated, hierarchical constructs that could be negotiated (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Crawford, Godbey, & Jackson, 1991).

Crawford & Godbey (1987) identified intrapersonal constraints as coming from within. These take the form of negative psychological states and perceived identity and self-esteem issues that negatively influence one's choice to participate in a leisure activity. They are:

...concerned with subjective perceptions or assessments of appropriateness and relevance of participation in a given leisure activity by the individual in question...The bases for determining such appropriateness and relevance may be psychological, cultural, and /or the result of genetic predisposition. (Godbey, Crawford, & Shen, 2010, p. 121)

Interpersonal barriers (constraints) are:

...the result of interpersonal interaction or the relationship between individuals' characteristics. These barriers are either the product of the intrapersonal barriers which accompany spouses into the marital relationship, thus affecting joint preference for specific leisure activities, or those barriers which arise as the result of spousal interaction. Barriers of this sort may interact with both preference for, and subsequent participation in, companionate leisure activities...In addition, the concept of interpersonal barriers is applicable to interpersonal relations in general...An individual may experience an interpersonal leisure barrier if he or she is unable to locate a suitable partner with which to engage in a particular activity. (Crawford & Godbey, 1987, p. 123)

Structural barriers (constraints):

...represent constraints as they are commonly conceptualized, as intervening factors between leisure preference and participation. Examples of structural barriers include family life-cycle stage, family financial resources, season, climate, the scheduling of work time, availability of opportunity (and knowledge of such availability), and reference group attitudes concerning the appropriateness of certain activities. (Crawford & Godbey, 1987, p. 122)

Barriers to leisure participation become relevant when considering that Americans walk less than people in other countries and drive more. "In America a pedestrian is someone who has just parked their car." (Vanderbilt, 2012, p. 3). The urban environment presents any number of barriers to walking. These include: 'walk' signs with insufficient time to actually cross the street; high speed traffic that will not yield to the crosswalk; becoming an insignificant speck on the horizon because of the large scale landscape; inaccessible or absent sidewalks; the push of the crowd; harassment by motorists; and fear for one's safety. I suggest that studying the lived experience of urban walkers from a phenomenological perspective offers an opportunity to explore the reasons people do walk as opposed to reasons they do not.

## **Phenomenology: Lived Experience**

Lived experience, in the phenomenological tradition, focuses on temporality, action, and attention. It is transitory, participatory, and reflective. The essence of the lived experience is known primarily through language. “The aim of phenomenology is to transform lived experiences into a textual expression of its essence.” (van Manen, 1990, p. 36). City walkers tell the stories of their experiences to convey the understandings of lived experiences. To understand,

I know nothing of this<sup>13</sup> while I am simply living in the flow of duration...The simple experience of living in the flow of duration goes forward in a uni-directional, irreversible movement...However, when, by my act of reflection, I turn my attention to my living experience, I am no longer taking up my position within the stream of pure duration...The experiences are apprehended, distinguished, brought into relief, marked out from one another...What had first been constituted as a phase now stands out as a full-blown experience...*For the Act of attention...*presupposes an elapsed, passed-away experience—in short, one that is already in the past. (Schutz, 1967a, p. 51)

Van Manen 1990 p.38, “Lived experience is what we experience as it happens, but we can only get at what we experience after it happens through a reconstruction of that experience.”(van Manen, 1990, p. 38).

My ontological philosophy embraces the mind-body connection, the notion that being and acting in the world is the essence of consciousness in lived experience. We are both of the social world and in the social world. Words in language connect those worlds and the people in them. My epistemological philosophy centers on reciprocity of experience as knowing; we gather knowledge through interpretation of interactions manifest in language. My epistemological goal is less to uncover some truth that exists apart from experience, but rather to consider experience an element of the interpretive ‘dance’ in the research project and as “a kind of spontaneous play...that unravels the multiple meanings of such notions as self, identity, objectivity, subjectivity, presence, truth, and being” (Schwandt, 2001, p. 203). Methodologically, I stand in

<sup>13</sup> flowing continuum of undifferentiated experiences

the phenomenological tradition that privileges experience and being in the world.

I ascribe to methodology that considers the foci of inquiry in research traditions that hope to gather enough information about the subject to develop an empathy (Denzin, 1997), to understand human action from inside the head of the actor; or to grasp how humans construct meaning in action through conversation and interaction (Schutz, 1967a); or analysis of text and the interplay of text (Eagleton, 1982; Gumbrecht, 2006; J. Hemingway, 1995). Consequently, I consider this research a mode of developing a better understanding of meaning within a human phenomenon, namely leisure walking, from a literary, historical perspective as well as an experiential perspective.

I hope to expand the leisure literature by applying new perspectives to research on walking that considers understanding of lived experience as “always on the way” (Gadamer, 1981, p. 105). Alfred Schutz’s phenomenological ‘lifeworld’ (Schutz, 1967a) and Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht’s literary typology, namely “meaning-culture” and “presence-culture” (Gumbrecht, 2006, p. 319) form the basic foundations for the study of walking in this project. Conceivably, giving emphasis to a standpoint that privileges the human experience, personal perception, and perceived meaning in the ‘doing’ of walking may shed some light on this issue and inform research and public health initiatives.

I intend to generate understandings of leisure (through the ‘walk’) that are “broader, deeper, more inclusive, and that more centrally honor the complexity and contingency of human phenomenon”(Greene, 2007, p. 98), and to make the familiar strange in order to challenge the given perspectives on walking taken by Leisure Studies scholars. Using multiple methods in this study intends to broaden understanding by considering experiences of walking in the present through the lens of the past.

My focus is a concern for understanding the experience in/of walking by studying an historical document on walking, as well as semi-structured interviews with city, leisure walkers, while considering these in a historical-comparative context. I chose to employ methodological perspectives within the epistemological and ontological underpinnings of the literary theory of Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and the phenomenology of Alfred Schutz. Following is an overview of the elements of Gumbrecht and Schutz's work that pertain to this dissertation research study. I felt that their ideas related to the nature of knowledge and of existence best fit my attempt to know about the walk and the essence of walking known to the walker. 'Lifeworld', 'meaning', and 'presence' are fundamental to my mixed methods research on walking.

### **Phenomenology: Literary Theory**

Studying walking while standing in the tradition of phenomenological methodology provides the opportunity to research leisure from a perspective that includes humanness in the lived experience of leisure and increases the opportunity for understanding how meaning is situated in everyday life. The socio-historical, dialectical, and performative characteristics of 'pedestrian' leisure, if latently situated in 19<sup>th</sup> Century literature and mirrored in present pedestrian culture, may prove valuable in confirming that writing on walking effectively establishes a dialogue between past and present. Walking itself may prove to act as a means through which one mediates perceptions of time and leisure. To 'walk' suggests an experiential space conducive to contemplative leisure that enables one to know the 'self' in moments, to see a place anew, and to participate in community. Therefore, it is vital in an effort to begin answering the above questions to conduct research that attempts to determine who walks, who does not walk, the reasons for walking, and the essence of walking.

In my mind, the study of humans in the social sciences does not fit neatly into methods

within the positivist tradition. Humans are variable and unpredictable, dynamic within culture. Grappling with notions of objectivity and subjectivity catalyzes understanding of meaning in leisure. I do not preclude either as illegitimate, but rather consider them symbiotic, in league with each other. In many aspects, the terms “objective” and “subjective” intimate either “the collective” or “the individual”, respectively. How are we able to scientifically and definitively separate one from the other in our understanding of meaning? Consider Schutz on the matter:

... Subjective meaning, in this sense, is the meaning which an action has for the actor or which a relation or situation has for the person or persons involved therein; objective meaning is the meaning the same action, relation, or situation has for anybody else, be it a partner or observer in everyday life, the social scientist, or the philosopher. The terminology is unfortunate because the term “objective meaning” is obviously a misnomer, in so far as the so-called “objective” interpretations are, in turn, relative to the particular attitudes of the interpreters and, therefore, in a certain sense, “subjective.” (Schutz, 1964, p. 275)

Henderson (1990) suggests, “social science and the study of leisure behavior can and should be also examined based on interpretive assumptions and pluralistic methods” (p.287). Schutz’s (1967) phenomenological view of meaning as “a lived experience [that] can be reduced to a turning of the attention to an already elapsed experience” (p. 215) in the everyday, has the potential to expand the ways in which leisure researchers consider ‘meaning.’ Meaning in leisure begins with the tacit act of being human.

Schutz’s phenomenological notion of a ‘lifeworld’ (Schutz, 1967a), as a condition of humanness that combines and makes sense of directly experienced realities with realities experienced indirectly, forms the overarching worldview for my research on walking. A leisure walker is both of and in the world. Gumbrecht’s literary theory relates literature/language to being in the world, as well as linking past to present. Both highlight the importance of the historical past and its impact on the present. Their views form the foundation from which I give consideration of this project as a mixed methods study. More specifically, I am using the



typologies of ‘meaning’ and ‘presence’, as forwarded by Gumbrecht (2006), as the methodological perspectives being mixed in this research project on walking.

Gumbrecht emphasizes the importance of physical stimuli (including literature), the capacity of language to connect past to present, and literature’s “appeal to the senses” (Gumbrecht, 2004a, p. xv). Rather than solely seeking analytical knowledge in humanistic inquiry, he stresses the importance of recognizing that a person’s *‘being’* in the world holds equal importance. He suggests that the “significance of experiential encounters with things” (Kramer, 2009, p. 86) assists human beings in explaining their sensory experiences. He proposes a typology between ‘meaning-cultures’ and ‘presence-cultures’ that links the past to the present. He suggests that they may serve as “a toolkit for a historical analysis” (Gumbrecht, 2010, p. 37).

In ‘meaning-cultures’, humans “define themselves exclusively by features of consciousness...see themselves as eccentric to the world of objects...[and] develop the ambition of using knowledge as a ground for a permanent transformation of the world” (Gumbrecht, 2010, p. 39). The dominant point of reference for humans is the mind. In this sense, humans see themselves as a subject separated from things in the world. In a meaning culture, legitimate knowledge can only come from a human act of getting to the truth through interpretation of what is revealed by the world (Gumbrecht, 2004a). There is an expectation (guided by interpretation) attached to the imposed obligation to transform the world in the everyday. ‘Meaning’ then relates to action and analytical knowledge. He takes the position that scholars and researchers in the humanities overemphasize the importance of how a human knows the world through systematic interpretation.

In ‘presence-cultures’, “the things of the world, on top of their material being, have an inherent meaning (not just a meaning conveyed to them through interpretation)” (Gumbrecht, 2004a, p. 80). The dominant locus of reference is the body. In this sense, humans see themselves as part of the world of things instead of separated from them. In a presence culture, knowledge is revealed in spiritual and physical ways, when humans are able to “inscribe their behavior into what they consider to be structures and rules of a given cosmology” (Gumbrecht, 2006, p. 319).

The rhythms of life are the stuff of which the seriousness of everyday interactions is made.

‘Presence’ then relates to intuition and being. He suggests that academicians and researchers take seriously the powerful influence of unexpected, aesthetic experiences that come from just being in the world in their efforts to understand human experience.

‘Meaning’ and ‘presence’ can be thought of colloquially as, making sense and sensing the made (Kramer, 2009). Gumbrecht’s position points to an overemphasis on the legitimacy of interpretation (meaning) in humanistic studies resulting in a loss of appreciation for aesthetic experience (presence). He advocates for a turn to humanistic studies that takes neither side, but considers the “oscillation (and sometimes interference) between ‘presence effects’ and ‘meaning effects’” (Gumbrecht, 2004a, p. 2). These are the perspectives I am mixing in this research project, ‘meaning’ (interpretation) and ‘presence’ (being-in-the-world). “Language can be the medium through which the separation of humans and the (physical) things of their environment can be overcome” (Gumbrecht, 2006, p. 317).

The literary text reflects the world and obliges the reader to suspend belief in what is familiar or taken for granted, while being “the substance of that which it relates” (Farrant, 2002). Social reality as held in literary text and lived experience data, is a relatively untapped source for analysis in research in the Leisure Studies field. Literature has its own ontology as it performs a role in understanding reality. For readers, it functions as “a material reality and as a reality of meaning...realities outside themselves” (Kramer, 2009, p. 86).

Following Gumbrecht, I consider “literary texts, as a material reality and as a reality of meaning, [that] may refer to realities outside themselves (Gumbrecht, 2008, p. 214). Very simply this essence of ‘meaning’ is interpretation—the looking at, looking in, and looking under the thing to be known. I bring myself, my worldview, to the thing that I interpret. Things in the

world are emplaced. Getting at experiential knowledge requires that I initiate a conversation with the particulars of a thing, such as the words in an essay, or information about the author and the historical context in which he wrote, or the action of walking. To me this implies a turning inward to the mind to see its totality, and getting at the “features of consciousness” (Gumbrecht, 2010, p. 39). I use my own worldview related to phenomenology to decide what matters in my act of interpretation.

To me, walking implies a lived awareness of one’s spatial immersion in the material world, a proximity to things that touch the senses, and embodiment that allows for epiphany, intuition, and unfamiliarity. It is “a corporeal phenomenon involving ‘all kinds of events and processes in which the impact that “present” objects have on human bodies is being initiated or intensified?’ (Gumbrecht, 2004a, p. xiii). Walking places one’s body in the world. It requires movement through and in the things somatically. In order to understand the experience of being in the world, one turns to language. According to Gumbrecht, language carries a physical reality as well as a felt reality. “It is a full-body situation in which our skin and our haptic sense participate” (Gumbrecht, 2008, p. 215).

Continuity underlies all understanding of human action which changes reflexively as a result of acquisition of knowledge in the passage of time (Bryman, 2004). ‘Presence’ and ‘meaning’ inform each other. They continuously blend and influence each other. In Gumbrecht’s terms, ‘presence’ and ‘meaning’ as I identify them in relationship to the language of writing about walking and talking about walking have no clear delineated boundaries, and they are an example of “the things of the world...[that] oscillate between presence effects and meaning effects (Gumbrecht, 2004a, p. xv).

The reflexive walk of the *flâneur* has the capacity to initiate and mediate conversations

with the lived experience of time and space (Ham et al., 2005) and with ‘presence’ and ‘meaning’. *Flânerie*’s pace resists the inevitable dictates of speed in our progressive society and establishes a connection to self and accountability to time. Claiming time in walking is claiming the self. The *flâneur*’s reflexivity presents the possibility for a hermeneutic-phenomenological study of being in leisure as contained in the language of literature and experience. I recognize the possibility of phenomenological insight in the language of ‘meaning’ and ‘presence’ as it comes to know leisure and meaning in the everyday mundane lived experience of walking.

### **Leisure Studies Historical and Philosophical Underpinnings**

In *Leisure, the Basis of Culture* (1948), Josef Pieper argued that leisure is central to being human. Pieper drew on philosophical and theological writings of Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, and others, to expound on principles of leisure. His fundamental tenets underscored the contemplative nature of ‘leisure-being’<sup>14</sup> as primary to a life of the highest order and a meaningful existence. Pieper differentiated ‘not-leisure’ from ‘leisure’ (Pieper, 1998). The notion of ‘not-leisure’ is time away from work existing only to serve work. “In leisure”, he writes, “the truly human is rescued, and preserved precisely because the area of the ‘just human’ is left behind...” (Ibid, p.36). ‘Leisure’ is a way of being in the world. A deified, deliberate life embraces leisure and the *vita contemplativa* “as the highest form of human living...*non proprie humana, sed superhumana*”<sup>15</sup> (Aquinas cited in Pieper, pp. 12-13), and “as necessary...for the perfection of the whole human community” (Ibid, p.26). I contend that there is little in Leisure Studies research that focuses on the ontology of leisure in ordinary lived experiences such as walking. City walking stands poised to translate the language of experience into leisure as meaning and rekindle the foundational ideas of Pieper.

<sup>14</sup> I use this term to reference leisure as a state of being, as in contemplation

<sup>15</sup> “contemplative life...not human, but superhuman” (Pieper, 1998, p. 13)

Loss of meaning in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century is of concern. Scholars in sociology, leisure, political science, cultural studies, philosophy, and literary studies attributes it to everything from industrialization, technological advances and demographic shifts (Putnam, 1995; Rybczynski, 1991), to mass culture and consumption (Bourdieu, 1984; Marcuse, 1964; Veblen, 1962), class and capitalism (Bialeschki & Henderson, 1986), and modernity (Benjamin, 1983; Rojek, 1997). The effects of these core issues on daily life are cultural shifts related to the primacy of work and devalued social capital, time famine and collapsing community involvement, anomic mood due to the collapse of certainty, as well as the separation of leisure from existence.

Despite the broad historical depth of the relevance of meaning to leisure studies, philosophy, cultural studies, and theology, in practice, perspectives on history itself often translate into a doxic belief that conditions naturally change over time. The past is left behind. This results in the commonly held belief of an inevitable progress, a standpoint impervious to questioning (Rojek, 1999). When leisure researchers and scholars innocently accept history as a linear progression from old-fashioned to modern, the risk is significant that the tomes of canonical discourse, the very genesis of the discipline, gather dust on shelves in the bowels of large university libraries. ‘Newer’ topics largely unrelated to concerns of earlier leisure scholars, gain precedence as the focal point of study and inquiry. Returning to canonical works in the field to understand the meaning found in leisure is an important step.

Present-day researchers’ penchant for projects focused on the instrumentality of ‘leisure-doing’<sup>16</sup> systematically depart from Pieper’s discussion on the considerable value of ‘leisure-being’ and instead reflect his ideas about a “today’s leisure-less culture of ‘total work’” (Ibid, p.4), rendering the relationship to ‘meaning’ imperceptible. As those in the fields of leisure

<sup>16</sup> I use this term to reference leisure as a bounded entity, such as a game

research moved toward interests in the functional qualities of leisure, positivism became desirable for research. In the declarative moment of stepping onto the sidewalk, leisurely walking seems out-of-time with the masses. Eye, body, and mind each experience motion that raises one's consciousness to the ephemeral "spatial and temporal character of the world flowing past the moving body" (Forgione, 2005, p. 665). I suggest that the pedestrian experience of walking "recovers an existential closeness to the material dimensions of things" (Gumbrecht, 2006, p. 326) while contextualizing the walk through language makes the experience tangible.

Leisure studies and leisure sciences research predominantly employ positivist or empiricist methodology in research, in an attempt to legitimize findings as is done in the natural sciences (Coalter, 1999; Deem, 1999; J. Hemingway, 1995; Henderson, 1990; Weissenger, Henderson, & Bowling, 1997). The goals of leisure research often seek to verify assumptions or test hypotheses made about the facts of leisure, such as behaviors, activity choices, and motivations, virtually eliminating subjective experience and perception as valid theoretical perspectives in the field of study (Deem, 1999; Henderson & Bialeschki, 1999).

Research in the Leisure Studies discipline seems to cluster around topics that predominantly study specific activities, societal 'goods'. Not only are the topics of study limited but the approaches and the terms and concepts used reify leisure. Extant literature in the field lays out theory as predominantly dichotomous using ideas such as compensation/spillover, intrinsic/extrinsic, flow/apathy, anti-structure/everyday, work/leisure, good/deviant, constraint/freedom, time urgency/free time. The terms and concepts in Leisure Studies such as 'leisure', 'family', 'work', 'community', 'freedom', 'gender', and 'diversity' are assumed to have uncontested meanings and are seldom questioned. I take this as suggesting that there are

only rigorously bounded categories suitable for study 'inside' the field. Where does the humanness of experience in leisure and walking fit?

Naturalized views of leisure include considering it: a 'good'; not work; equally accessible and available; having accomplished 'diversity' and gender equity; essential to well-being. It influences what questions are asked and how questions are asked, what answers are 'heard', how research is conducted, how and what researchers and academics 'see', as well as the form and format in which research is discussed. Without questioning what counts in leisure research, as well as explicating what is taken as 'truth,' we turn a blind eye to the possibility that there are other undiscovered ways of knowing about the lived experience of leisure. Challenging conformity/complacency and stasis in the field may add validity and meaning to the everyday lived leisure experience.

Conceivably, the study of humans in Leisure Studies does not fit neatly into methods located in the positivist tradition. There is recognition of the need for situating inquiry of social reality within context and cultural meaning (Henderson, 1990). Perhaps this attempt has fallen short, since it seems that researchers continue to employ post-positivist methodological positioning fitting leisure research into scientific method by deciding to quantify qualitative data in a way that is mimetic of data analysis in research conducted within the positivist tradition. Hemingway (1995) goes so far as to suggest that that positioning has narrowed what is understood about lived leisure.

Deviating from research topics consigned to functionalist or utilitarian walking to a study on walking that privileges lived experience, I find it important to develop a broader experiential concept of the pedestrian within a comparative and historical context. There is evidence of support for studying lived leisure by joining with and getting closer to "exploring conversational,

multivocal and critical representations of research” (Parry & Johnson, 2007, p. 121). This requires the use of qualitative research methods that utilize reflexive methodology to recover more of the humanness in leisure (Dupuis, 1999; J. Hemingway, 1995).

The focus on leisure as representative of cultural and social reproduction, narrows the focus to analysis and interpretation of structural explanations, policy formation and provision of leisure (Coalter, 1999). The lack of interest in the individual or group construction of meaning in leisure is left out. In recent years, utilization of qualitative research has become more visible within the field, and therefore, has garnered more attention (Deem, 1999; Dupuis, 1999; Green, 1998; J. Hemingway, 1995; J. Hemingway & Parr, 1999). Many studies now utilize analysis of interviews, focus groups, and indirect observation as sources of data by employing creative strategies for studying and reporting leisure research. Following Richardson (2000) and Parry (2007), I am “awaken[ed] to the problematics of collecting and reporting “data” and hope to challenge “disciplinary rules and boundaries on ethical, aesthetic, theoretical, and empirical grounds” (Richardson, 2000a, p. 253) by moving toward creative research grounded in the human lived experience of leisure.

### **Leisure and *Flâneurie***

*Flânerie* , in a narrow sense, refers to the act of idle strolling in nineteenth-century Paris, while visually collecting social artifacts of metropolitan life – the human sights and material culture of the urban crowd. In a wider sense, it is immersion in an anonymous, spectatorial gaze that gives license to wandering and observing. (Reible, 2007, p. 1763)

Many have written about the *flâneur*. The predominant sociological and literary fascination with the *flâneur* dates from the mid-Nineteenth Century and early Twentieth Century, most notably in the writing of Charles Baudelaire and Walter Benjamin, respectively. However, Balzac’s 1833 essay, *Théorie de la Démarche*, preceded Baudelaire’s by thirty years and presents similar perspective on walking.



Balzac wrote extensively about Paris, its street life, politics, and inhabitants, most notably, *La Comédie Humaine*<sup>17</sup>, an examination of French society, as a collection of 100 linked stories in the early 1800s. He fashioned himself a keen observer, historian and scientist (Robb, 1994). He walked a great deal to collect observations as a scientific researcher translating the pedestrian landscape of Paris (Balzac, 1981).

In *Théorie de la Démarche*, Balzac illustrates broad themes that center on the human condition as he observed walkers on the streets of Paris. His goal was to systematically organize social and cultural perspective of walking in the form of general truisms, or axioms, that had not previously been attributed to the embodied walking landscape. General themes of the 12 axioms he outlined include beauty, leisure, movement, the body, and quotidian life. He was one who considered himself as a person who “never walk[s] along in heedless inattention” (Harvey, 2003, p. 56). He also believed that walking revealed everything about a person. The text of his historical, literary essay precedes and relates to the ideas of Baudelaire’s *flâneur* as being observer of the city and its people simply by being there (Tribunella, 2012). Balzac’s essay adds to the conversation of time and leisure, as well as extends our historical perspective in understanding the essence of walking.

Meaning, leisure and phenomenology (Schmidt & Little, 2007), walking and brief experiences (Hull, Michael, Walker, & Roggenbuck, 1996), the city and *flâneur* (Bairner, 2012; S. Fleming, Horne, & Watson, 2012; Prickett, 2011), call for an experiential engagement with culture (Haldrup & Larsen, 2006). I take a historical-comparative view of leisure in the belief that it serves to teach us about current issues. When considering the sidewalk as palimpsest, pedestrians write and re-write a layered manuscript of place on the urban landscape, tacitly

<sup>17</sup> The Human Comedy

engaging with those who walked before. *Flânerie* engenders reflexivity that has the potential to inform understanding and create meaning as a method of participation in leisure.

Therefore, this project emphasizes the significance of discursive practices as data for contextualizing and understanding lived experiential knowing and meaning in leisure as conceived in walking. For, it is only the external, shared medium of language, both spoken and written, that enables a researcher and participant to interpret and comprehend each other. Utilizing concepts of phenomenology in literature (Natanson, 1998) expands knowledge of leisure meaning as gleaned from the literary imagination. In studying expressed perceptions of meaning in leisure experienced and talked about by present day New York City walkers, as well as those inferred from the historical walking ethos in Balzac's, the hope is that this knowledge brings a human dimension to promotion of daily activity that enhances adherence to healthful living.

### **Critique of the Literature**

Historically, the narrow focus of the study of leisure, generally blamed on the overuse of survey research methods, limits consideration of the relevance of cultural, social, and individual contexts and meanings (Coalter, 1999; J. Hemingway, 1995; Henderson & Bialeschki, 1999; Parry & Johnson, 2007; Rojek, 1999) Although important to researchers in the field in gaining initial respect as a legitimate social science, surveys and questionnaires continue as the primary sources of data even though the methods limit what is known about how leisure is lived. A serious limitation of survey research is the incongruence between what the individual reports and what actually occurs. This is particularly true when the questions asked create a sense of needing to protect one's image. The respondent may self-report a 'better' truth. Limiting study to the purview of positivist methodology focuses primarily on the instrumentality of leisure rather than

the lived experience and meaning in praxis. Walking seems to be treated as something to be known through scientific inquiry which “leads to the fallacy of misplaced concreteness whereby living, changing human relations are treated as static, immovable categories” (Crawford & Godbey, 1987, p. 12)

With regard to the limitations of the current state of knowledge in the research literature on walking covered in this review, it appears that there is considerable overlap in the specific topics and research methods among the disciplines. Surprisingly, the research seems encapsulated within disciplines as well. Research on walking in Leisure Studies is largely absent compared to research in other disciplines. Reliance on the use of surveys is pervasive, with their inherent limitations as noted above. Most of the research studies in any discipline target concerns regarding identification and mitigation of barriers or constraints to walking. Very little of the research includes qualitative methodology, leaving out a perspective needed to inform research on the personal, lived experience of walking. There were few references to issues of accessibility, as it seemed that ability to walk was presumed. Additionally, no one addressed inclusion issues related to the terminology of ‘walkable cities’.

On the positive side, the research supported walking without exception. Researchers consistently touted the benefits of walking such as improved overall health, disease prevention, and weight management. In addition, the researchers believed in the potential for walking promotion to reverse the decline in physical activity of adults in the United States. The research on walking provides practitioners, planners, and policy makers with sufficient knowledge to allow them to move forward with organized programs and planned environments conducive to walking. I continue to advocate for Leisure Studies research that occupies the realm of

experience. I choose to take a broader view of the leisure walker as an intersubjectively, embodied and emplaced human who takes part in the contrapuntal texture of the world.

In general, the literature on walking discussed in this review overemphasizes the capacity of the built environment and other external factors to influence a person's desire to choose physical activity. In that context, attributes and aesthetics of walkable environments determined by those who already walk along with those in positions of power making the policy and planning decisions take precedence. There is rarely reference to walking as 'leisure'. Utilitarian and functional reasons for walking are the primary concern (i.e. to reduce obesity, to prevent heart disease, to develop social capital).

Another related concern of this literature regards the cause/effect relationship between the environment and walking rates that seems to prevail. The focus on building environments for walking seems to set walking apart from daily life. In New Urbanism walking takes on an air of elitism an activity only for those who have surplus time to choose walking. Urban walking trails are nice but, what about researching and developing strategies to increase walking by stepping out the front door and using the walkways with the closest proximity? When considering the reasons for wanting to increase physical activity in adults, such as combating the obesity epidemic, how does operating on the premise that, 'if we build it, they will come' accomplish that? What about considering who walks, who does not walk, the reasons for walking, the essence of walking. Getting at the heart of the matter, the *raison d'être* of walking is the human aspect yet to be revealed.

Consequently, I consider my dissertation research as intending to add to the conversation in the Leisure Studies discipline by developing a better understanding of meaning within a human phenomenon, namely leisure walking, from a literary, historical perspective as well as an

experiential perspective. I hope to generate understandings of lived experience (through the ‘walk’) that are “broader, deeper, more inclusive, and that more centrally honor the complexity and contingency of human phenomenon” (Rojek, 1997, p. 157), and to make the familiar strange in order to challenge the given perspectives on walking taken by Leisure Studies scholars. I believe that a move to a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology in the study of leisure is the way to transform research in the field, to allow “greater acknowledgement of human involvement in creating the social world and of the importance attached to establishing meaning in it” (Greene, 2007, p. 98).

### **CHAPTER 3: METHODS**

“...the social world is given to us in a complex system of perspectives” (Schutz, 1967a, p. 8)

The goal of this research is to gain new insights into understanding the perspectives of walkers who choose to walk for its own sake in New York City, a contested urban, pedestrian place, at a time when many people choose sedentary lifestyles despite rising obesity rates and alarming warnings about the health risks associated with obesity. This comes at a time when programs aimed to increase physical activity repeatedly fail when depending solely upon prescriptive, outcome-based recommendations drawn from medicalized research. Gaining perspectives from city walkers adds to understanding the lived experience of leisure. By exploring the voiced perspectives of those who choose to prioritize city walking in their lives, it is conceivable that embedded nuances of lived experience may emerge to advance efforts aimed at inducing others to engage in a physical activity.

This chapter centers on detailing the epistemological values, methodological standpoint, and specific research practices employed in this project that form the foundation for studying walking in literature and personal experience. I use methods from translation studies, hermeneutic phenomenology, literary theory, and interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008) to explore and understand the experience of urban, leisure walking in New York City. The first section establishes my underlying theoretical standpoint for choosing the methods for this research project, namely the phenomenological tradition as it relates to the lived experience. Following that is a discussion of the research paradigm of hermeneutic-phenomenology and its interface with literary theory. Next, come discussions about the roles of translation, qualitative analysis, and IPA as methods employed in gaining knowledge about walking.

The leisure space imprinted by the walker suffuses the historical fabric of urban cultural place. Not surprising then, writing on walking holds a rich and varied history. One finds walking narratives in: religion, mythology, folklore, philosophy, geography, science, history, tourism, and literature. Reading and walking, though seemingly unexceptional leisure pastimes, reflexively empower knowledge of self and other in the everyday. I offer that the act of moving in the world in the walk is at the crux of humanness, and therefore, of meaningful existence. Deviating from research topics consigned to functionalist or utilitarian walking, I propose development of a broader experiential concept of the urban pedestrian within a comparative and historical context.

### **Role of Social Inquirer**

Traditional social research bounded to a foundation of specific ontological and epistemological principles insists there is an objective, irreducible social world that exists independent of the inquirer or object and is accessible to the researcher. Quality inquiry depends on eliminating valuational assumptions, and achieving objectivity. The truth value of the knowledge gains about the irreducible social world depends on the methods used (J. Hemingway & Parr, 1999). These criteria are central to theory-based leisure research (J. Hemingway, 1995). I reject privileging positivism and embrace the belief that reflexivity, as a researcher is imperative. I consider that qualitative research is multi-method in focus and involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Of primary consideration in inquiry is that the researcher engages with the subject of inquiry in a way that informs the inquirer. Bernstein (1983) explained the process for the inquirer as:

...object oriented, in the sense that it directs us to the texts, institutions, practices, or forms of life that we are seeking to understand....he or she must have the insight, imagination, openness, and patience to acquire this art-an art achieved through practice. (p.135)

As the study of leisure changes, understanding the role of the social inquirer in the human sciences becomes a necessary element in the discussion. The purpose of social inquiry is to understand a subject or subject matter (N. H. Smith, 2002). The aim of the social inquirer then takes one of two paths: the path of objective observer (interpretive), or the transactional/transformational path (hermeneutic).

The research questions delineated in the introduction serve to guide decisions regarding the choice of methods for this research project. They are: (1) what can literature 'do' in the quest for knowledge of the lived experience of leisure? (2) How do meaning (mind) and presence (body) manifest in the individual experience of walking? (3) What is the lived experience of movement of the body in walking and perceptions of time space and time? The primary concern of this project lies with understanding the lived experience of the city walker. According to Schutz, "the ordinary person, acting in the world, is in a biographically-determined situation...to select from the environment and from interactions with others, those elements that make sense for the purpose at hand" (Wilson, 2002, p. 3).

I suggest that 'reading' leisure using the literary theory of Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht while looking through the lens of the phenomenological paradigm of Alfred Schutz places research inside the human experience and moves along the discipline's understandings of the ways in which meaningfulness is derived from a mindful awareness of lived experience.

### **Methodological Standpoint**

In choosing the most effective methods for this project, I ground my research values in phenomenology, a paradigm based in the assumption that personal knowledge and experience



are valued perspectives for understanding lived experience. This becomes important, when leisure research fails to resonate with those who read it or look to it for practical recommendations, and it loses its potential for social or personal impact. When attempting to put such research into practice, something gets lost in translation. Connecting Leisure Studies research to practice becomes a priority when findings of humanistic research suggest ways to improve well-being.

The interest in implementation and utilization of qualitative research methods by leisure researchers points toward increasing the possibility to “get at” leisure as it is “lived” in order to understand ‘meaning’ (Dupuis, 1999; Green, 1998; J. Hemingway, 1995; Stebbins, 1997; Weissenger et al., 1997). Phenomenology secures “a knowable world with one hand” and establishes “the centrality of the human subject with the other” (Eagleton, 1996). Understanding is less an arrival at some destination through application of a predetermined method and more a participatory event (Schwandt, 1994).

In support of this is the recognition by scholars in the field as to the importance of ‘meaning’ in everyday lived experience. The researcher participates in understanding by asking questions and hearing stories of lived experience as internally felt in the body, as externally shown in action, and as dialogically exchanged through language. In phenomenology, the primary interest lies in human action as inherently meaningful in the minutiae of everydayness and as expressed in narrative accounts of perceived lived experience.

### **Hermeneutic-Phenomenology**

A hermeneutic phenomenological methodology, posits that understanding is the very condition of being human, and is itself interpretation (Gadamer, 1981; Schutz, 1964; Taylor, 1985). A turning to the influence of language as mediating reality assists in the study of the life-

worlds of others.

Taken broadly, leisure is multidimensional and embodied in a limitless variety of texts. 'Text', in this sense, proposes consideration of figurative, in addition to literal contexts. Hermeneutic-phenomenological inquiry in the study of walking opens itself to the experience of leisure rather than accommodating experience to the demands of method (J. Hemingway, 1995). It follows then, that the experience itself acts as a basis for understanding.

The goal of the hermeneutic path is to provide the knowledge necessary to interpretively move about the world as a self-interpreting being (Taylor, 1985). Knowledge is constitutive of being human, and is already practice. Phenomenology seeks to know human experience in the temporal structures of the everyday (Schutz, 1967a). The inquirer considers knowledge to be ethical advice and for being in becoming (Gadamer, 1981). This is first order knowledge in the form of narrative. Humans are beings for whom things matter (Taylor, 1985).

The hermeneutic paradigm is party dependent, bilateral, seeking no power over its subject matter, and has the ultimate aim of improving functioning together in the world (Taylor, 1995). Understanding requires the engagement of one's biases and is participative, conversational, and dialogic (Gadamer, 1981; Schutz, 1964; Taylor, 1985). Understanding is produced (not reproduced) within that dialogue, is temporal and processive, always in the process of becoming (Schwandt, 2000). Understanding is multilayered and dynamic, interactive and experiential, historical and political, social and cultural, public and private, subverted and illusory. Understanding of leisure and spare time relations reflects the ambiguity of modernity (Rojek, 1997). Understanding begins in micro-human experience.

The task of phenomenology is to see the world and its complexities, in order to outline, explore, and trace the features and relationships that occur in its everydayness (Schutz, 1967b).

Within the situated and negotiated part of everyday life, leisure is lived and practiced. Leisure is lived in social networks and communities, with friends and around the home (Coalter, 1999; Green, 1998). Hemingway (1995) states, “meaning arises not from the insular subjective situation, but by reference beyond the immediate to the intersubjectively constituted world in which the individual acts” (p.39).

Phenomenology seeks to know human experience in the temporal structures of the everyday; this is the moment of phenomenological insight. For the writer/reader, text functions in that capacity as well. It acts as a call to turn language into meaning (Eagleton, 1996). “The book itself is the substance of that which it relates...its aim is always and consistently to be that of which it speaks” (Mann in Natanson, 1998, p. xvi). In the context of phenomenology, literature paradoxically informs practice.

Research methods based in the hermeneutic phenomenological tradition serves to situate both the researcher and participant in the act of walking. Equally important to this project is a research perspective that includes historical context and location, both needed to inform findings and the field (Rojek, 2005). Understanding demands an expanded methodology of inquiry “toward a fuller comprehension of leisure’s meaning as a form of human activity” (J. Hemingway, 1995, p. 39). Phenomenological methodology requires a comparable reflexivity in that it participates in the present. Literary experience is another way of knowing. When considering hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry in the study of leisure, it opens methodology to the experience of leisure rather than “insisting experience accommodate to the demands of method” (J. Hemingway, 1995, p. 44).

In this sense, the methodological position for this project relies on the embedded common sense understandings realized by a person being in the world as the source of knowing lived

experience. The approaches used in this project align with methods consistent with phenomenological research that give emphasis to ontological meaning in lived experience, namely translation, semi-structured interviews, observation, literary philosophy, and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

### **Purpose of Choosing the Methods for this Study**

My conviction that leisurely walking illuminates meaning within the minutiae of everyday lived experience foreshadows my preoccupation with an essay, *Théorie de la Démarche*, Honoré de Balzac (1981), first published as: *Théorie de la Démarche*, Paris, Eugène Didier, Editor, 6 rue des Beaux-Arts, MDCCCLII. Considering the city sidewalk as palimpsest, the pedestrian writes and re-writes a layered manuscript of place on the urban landscape and potentiates availability of implicit knowledge. Balzac knew this well from his walks and observations of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Parisians. I know this from my own *flâneuristic* forays on the urban pavement. These first steps initiated the research.

As mentioned in the introduction, data sources for this project are the essay by Balzac, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of New York walkers, and my own observations from walking in Paris and New York as data sources. I initiated my research by translating the essay from French to English. From Balzac's observations in this essay, I constructed questions intended for interviews of individuals who walk in New York City with the aim of linking past to present perceptual experience.

Meaning in leisure, as situated within the individual as part of the experience of daily living, has received little attention in research in the field of Leisure Studies. Therefore, I chose to take historical and phenomenological approaches in my attempt to understand meaning in leisure walking in order to move from the bounded categories of positivist methodology. For this

project, I used methodologies for researching historical literature and present experience that come from different perspectives. I contend that mixing perspectives is in a broad sense, mixing methods. Following is my rationale and description of methods for this project.

Text is not innocent. When considered as representation (Hall, 1997), text “produces meaning and understanding” (p.166). The reader takes in text and uses language through the filters of his or her own experience. This requires making inferences, implicit connections, interpreting ‘indeterminacies’, and filling in gaps; to do this means making use of one’s tacit knowledge of the experiential world and of the conventions of language (Eagleton, 1996). In this participatory, dynamic feat, language becomes meaning which ‘concretizes’ the text or literary work into something more than black marks on a page (Eagleton, 1996; Gumbrecht, 2006).

There is a primary difference between research of content and literature. The distinction is one of first or second degree knowledge (Angenot, 2004). The text, imbued with the author’s understandings of occurrences in the social milieu, affects meaning for the reader.

Phenomenological literary studies in a sense attempts to show how first and second degree knowledge live in text and language. The individual has an accumulation of knowledge that is potentially knowable by the inquirer (Schutz, 1962).

Certainly, the transformation of the process of writing from the knowing writer may reproduce and reflect prevailing doxa, or may choose to transgress or transcend established norms. The work of literature, in a narrow sense, is a practice that contributes to the fabric of social discourse. In our humanness, we sometimes fail to see ourselves as we live each moment; we can name it, derive meaning from it, or know it after the fact. Sometimes, clarity and occasionally epiphany comes as we read ourselves in another’s fictive reality (Natanson, 1998).

Whether deliberate or unintentional, texts contain meaning (Hall, 1997): “foregrounding

certain interpretations and excluding others, seeking to plot a relatively unambiguous route through meaning” (p. 166). The reader of literature tangibly recognizes essences of being in the text as they emerge in the course of a reading and sees it not only as someone else’s words but as the essence of the world (Natanson, 1998). The extant literature acknowledges the centrality of experience to engagement and participation in leisure (Coalter, 1999; Dupuis, 1999; J. Hemingway, 1995). The discipline often privileges quantitative research methods leaving out consideration of the relevance of historical, cultural, social, and individual contexts and meanings (Henderson & Bialeschki, 1999; Rojek, 1999; Rojek, Shaw, & Veal, 2006). I find this position incompatible with my mental model.

Consequently, I consider this research a mode of developing a better understanding of meaning within a human phenomenon, namely leisure walking, from a literary, historical perspective as well as an experiential perspective.

I approach this study from an a-paradigmatic stance, as I appreciate and acknowledge the influence of paradigms on research practice decisions and reject the notion that paradigmatic philosophical assumptions are incommensurable. I believe that research approaches are dynamic and emergent relative to the context, objectives, and theories of the research (Greene, 2007). I find paradigms valuable as a departure point for thinking about the way to approach study of a phenomenon, and I view methods as meeting the needs of the context and study rather than any prescribed paradigm. Opportunities exist to merge and create new ways of doing research. Research methods themselves are not necessarily paradigmatic. Another significant consideration for aligning with this stance is a desire to challenge to put forth new ways of understanding leisure.

My reasons for using historical literature and interviews are to bring perspectives from the past to bear on the present, and vice versa. City walking has a long established history. This research project places emphasis on the importance of a comparative and historical perspective in understanding the experience of city walking. I strongly believe that “through the historical analysis of human behavior we gain an understanding of what is unique to our time and what our time shares in common with earlier historical periods” (Rojek, 2005, p. 39). Thus, a comparative-historical perspective provides a viewpoint from which to look at the present through the medium of the past.

City walking stands astride historical and contemporary views of leisure. In current consumer culture, angst endemic to a fast-pace leads us to conflate ‘free time’ with ‘leisure time’, leaving little place for the time-laden contemplation of the past. There is a sense that we are running out of time, and this is most evident in reference to our leisure (Rojek, 1997). This seemingly leaves out consideration for the venerable place still held by the state of being found in the ‘slow time’ of contemplative leisure, as well as concern for the oft expressed desperation to have it (leisure) in daily life (Godbey, 1999). Researching the city walker presents us with the chance to advance the horizon of understanding of leisure meaning by revealing the value of an historical context embedded in the present experiential location of movement in the terra firma of urban leisure.

### **Making Sense of the Methods**

When reflecting on Balzac’s essay as a data source for this project, I began to wonder about its position in the research related to the act of leisure walking. What kind of data is an essay on walking? How did I think about narrated walking data? How do they fit together? When studying research methods, I grappled with the somewhat bounded notions of what constitutes

quantitative and qualitative data anyway. In most cases, I considered interviews a source of qualitative data. However, I was unsure about the essay itself and my translation of it. Is the essay ‘data’ at all? What role does it play in the research? My contemplation raised the question, “what ‘counts’ as data?” I recognized that part of the answer to these questions rested on my epistemological and ontological assumptions, as well as my worldview.

I believe that there are assumptions regarding the characterization of ‘data’, and that rarely is it discussed among research scholars. When considering ways to study leisure experience, I align with Henderson in that, “the important aspect is not the positivists verses the post-positivists...but how we can understand the phenomenon of leisure and inquiry better” (Henderson, 1990, p. 284). That is the purpose of this project.

It seems to me that many of the efforts to define, categorize, typologize, rationalize, and validate mixed methods research come from standpoints of closeness. To my way of thinking, using words in the discussion of what constitutes mixed methods research such as-- ‘Procedure’, ‘delineate’, ‘consensus’, ‘critical design elements’, ‘complexity’, ‘actual terms’, ‘agreement’, ‘specific research design’ (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003; Greene, 2007)—have a narrowing effect. They suggest a kind of digging in or immersion, an attempt to get ever closer to what is meant in order to decide once-and-for-all what ‘counts’. Yet, in a review of multiple research projects that claimed to use a mixed methods approach, “the actual terms used to denote a mixed methods study var[ied] considerably in the procedural discussions of this design” (Creswell et al., 2003, pp. 164-165).

Thus, since there is no definitive consensus, and in considering the predominant definitions of mixed methods research from my own worldview, I struggled in fitting this project neatly into a specific typology. Most seem to focus primarily on the binary juxtaposition of



quantitative elements and qualitative elements. Therefore, I decided to let go of the need to validate this project by naming one data source as ‘quantitative’ and the other ‘qualitative’ to fit into the predominant definitions of ‘mixed methods research’. However, I was unwilling to give up on my gut feeling that this was indeed a ‘mixed methods study’, as this “umbrella term” (Creswell et al., 2003, p. 165) suggests. Intuitively, I felt that overlaying an essay written about walking in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century onto narrative experiences of walking in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century required mixed methods at some level.

So, when I read the definition offered by Creswell, et al:

...a *mixed methods study* involves the collection or analysis of both quantitative and/or qualitative data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially, are given a priority, and involve the integration of the data at one or more stages in the process of research. (Hanson, Creswell, Plano Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005, p. 212),

the “or” caught my attention. This definition clearly allows space for me, as researcher, to reasonably expand the ideas of what ‘counts’ as a mixed methods study. After all, I have an historical essay on walking (language), as well as experience, my own (direct observation) and that described by others (interview transcriptions). These are certainly varied sources for gaining knowledge about leisure and walking, and compel me to find creative ways of engagement that demand a different viewpoint from which to consider analysis. Why not take a step back from the details of what constitutes mixed methods research and broaden the methodological horizon?

I subscribe to the ‘spirit’ of a mixed methods way of thinking that embraces creativity and invites multiple ways of knowing into a study. It resists picking epistemological sides, promotes engaging with difference, and invokes tensions (Greene & Caracelli, 1997). This in turn carries “generative potential” (Greene, 2007, p. 27) for considering new ways to think about and do research. I decided that looking at my project from a distant horizon made more sense. In

that spirit, I am prepared to establish that the data and this research project ‘count’ as a ‘mixed-methods’ study only in a different way. My intentions are to expand the notions of what falls under the umbrella of ‘mixed-methods research’ to include a mixing of perspectives.

After Richardson (2000) and Parry (2007), I endorse a view of leisure research committed to “exploring ways to get closer to understanding the lived experiences of leisure...to contextualize leisure and experiences and treat them as a complex phenomenon” (Parry & Johnson, 2007, p. 121). My attempt to study urban walking honors the viewpoint that the nature of lived experience in the context of leisure is complex, and I acknowledge that it is impossible to represent the lived experience of the participants in this research as it is actually lived (Schwandt, 2001). I subscribe to the study of leisure walkers consistent with the goals of Creative Analytic Practice (CAP) (Richardson, 2000a), namely research that attempts “to reflect experiences in ways that represent their personal and social meanings rather than simplifying and reducing to generalize” (Parry & Johnson, 2007).

I choose to take a broader view of leisure walkers as intersubjectively, embodied and emplaced humans who take part in the contrapuntal texture of the world. From this meta-paradigmatic position, I turn to the methodologies of phenomenology and literary theory for this study on literary and experiential walking. In an attempt to expand the focus of paradigm discussions as they relate to mixed methods research, I use the perspectives of ‘presence’ (literature/history) and ‘meaning’ (interpretation) (Gumbrecht, 2006) from within Schutz’s phenomenological framework (Schutz, 1962), to study leisure walking.

### **Phenomenology in Literature**

My focus is a concern for understanding the experience in/of walking by studying an historical document on walking, as well as semi-structured interviews with city, leisure walkers,

while considering these in a historical-comparative context. The English translation of an 1833 essay, *Théorie de la Démarche* (Balzac, 1981) form the starting point for this project on leisure walking. Three notebooks of written impressions taken during four trips to Paris and four trips to New York City comprise my experiential notes on walking. Five semi-structured interviews of self-identified leisure walkers from New York City, using questions based on the axioms from Balzac's essay, comprise another data source. This makes available multiple viewpoints from which to expand understanding.

I chose to employ methodological perspectives within the epistemological and ontological underpinnings of the literary theory of Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and the phenomenology of Alfred Schutz. I shall discuss the elements of their work that pertain to this mixed methods study. I felt their ideas related to the nature of knowledge and of existence best fit my attempt to know about the walk and the essence of walking known to the walker. 'Lifeworld', 'meaning', and 'presence' are fundamental to my mixed methods research on walking.

I am applying the typology of 'meaning' as a methodology from which the study *Théorie de la Démarche*. Translation itself, as dependent on language, is laden with the historical moments in and comparative elements of the source and target languages (Venuti, 1998). As a novice translator, I began the project with a focus on the method of word-for-word translation (Jones, 1997) by studying the source language, gaining moderate reading proficiency in French. Word-for-word translation preserves the source language word order and translates each word by the most commonly found meanings (Ordudary, 2007). Several procedures helped me in the translation of culture-specific terms and concepts found in Balzac's essay. Describing or paraphrasing to evoke a similar connotation, substituting with a word that has a similar effect on

the reader, translating by omission, and using a loan word are examples (Baker, 1992; Venuti, 1998). In addition, the field of discourse, tenor of discourse, and mode of discourse were taken into consideration (Baker, 1992). As such, reading other works by Balzac written in 1833 (i.e., *Eugénie Grandet* and *The Country Doctor*) translated by others provide examples that serve as a referential backdrop in the use of these techniques for the translation of *Théorie de la Démarche*.

I use my own worldview related to phenomenology to decide what matters in my act of interpretation. The Balzac essay from 1833 holds meaning that I must translate in order to link ideas about walking from that time to the language of reality in experiential walking in this time. I am applying Gumbrecht's typology of 'presence' as a philosophical methodology from which to study experiential walking. Overlaying the perspective of 'presence' onto the talk of walking constitutes a method of inquiry for understanding the experience of walking. I suggest this is consistent with integrative mixed methods designs in that what I am doing here is mixing two perspectives that are "assessing the same phenomenon [walking] though...different and overlapping facets of this phenomenon" (Greene, 2007, p. 125).

### **What Counts as Data in *This* Research Project?**

The data for this project are the essay, my experiential field notes, and interviews. Following are the processes and thinking that establish my consideration of these as data. I began with a critical reading of *Théorie de la Démarche* (Balzac, 1981) to understand the walker with regard to a historical walking ethos.

**The essay.** Text and language are data. My conviction that leisurely walking illuminates meaning within the minutiae of everyday lived experience is consistent with a 19<sup>th</sup> Century essay that uses language to depict walking, *Théorie de la Démarche*, Honoré de Balzac (1981). I consider walking as being at the crux of humanness. Considering the city sidewalk as palimpsest,

the pedestrian writes and re-writes a layered manuscript of place on the urban landscape. Balzac knew this well from his walks and observations of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Parisians. I know this from my own *flâneuristic* forays on the urban pavement.

**Observations.** Standing in the phenomenological tradition, observations are an important part of this research project. It presents an opportunity to experience the “tensed” reality of meaning in a personal ‘life world’ as my bodily present acts within that of the historic to gain empathic understanding of other urban walkers (Schutz, 1962). I walked extensively, for hours and days, in Paris and New York while observing the pedestrian landscape.

I suggest that the lived reality of my own city walking is informal participant observation. The goal of this immersion as a walker in the urban setting of Paris was to collect my own social artifacts and become familiar with the setting in which Balzac walked. Standing in the phenomenological tradition, I consider observation an important part of this research project. It presents an opportunity to experience the “tensed” reality of meaning in a personal ‘life world’ as my bodily self acts within that of the historic to gain empathic understanding of other urban walkers (Schutz, 1962).

**Interviews.** In addition to employing participant observation, interviews provide another source of data that deepens understanding one who walks. Face-to-face interviews following a semi-unstructured, conversational format completed the data gathering. Qualitative interviewing design is iterative, allowing for flexibility and continuous reflexivity, rather than being limiting and locked in stone (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The purpose of the interviews is to uncover the meanings of the participant’s experience of walking in New York City. Voice recording and transcribing intends to capture the interviewee’s answers in their own language (Bryman, 2004). Field notes serve to assist in documenting the body language, movement, expressions,

appearance, and location descriptions when analyzing the interview transcripts.

Considering the nature of data less a dichotomy (quan-qual) than a continuum, the literary text, observations, and narrative move together, each informing the other. Narrative accounts of walking hold thematic data, from the viewpoint of the researcher, in the form of words or phrases. This may yield perceptions of meaning, emotions, contexts, temporality, and experience as formulated in language. This project began with the task of translating *Théorie de la Démarche*. What follows is further explication regarding my process for translating the essay from French to English.

### **Translating Leisure**

Honoré de Balzac wrote the essay *Théorie de la Démarche*, or A Theory of Walking as a four part series, for publication in 1833 in l'Europe littéraire, a weekly literary newspaper. E. Didier, Paris, published it as a book, in 1853, three years after Balzac's death. Thirty pages of the original manuscript remain and are archived in the Louvenjoul Collection, Chantilly France. I referenced the 1981 La Comédie Humaine, Éditions Gallimard for this project, as well as microfilm reproductions of the original manuscript pages.

Balzac, a celebrated French writer, is a literary master of writing stories that illuminate “the paradoxical and dichotomous relationship between objective and subjective, illusion and reality, large and small, literature and life” (Farrant, 2002, p. 301). Known most notably for his novel of more than 100 linked stories, *La Comédie Humaine*, he was self-driven to incorporate details in his writing about the human condition as he observed it in the day-to-day lives of the citizens of Paris. His works are intentionally philosophic, analytic, and instructive. His narratives are purposive in his desire to capture the essence of French society in its totality.

The essay *Théorie de la Démarche*, or *A Theory of Walking*, is an essay based on

Balzac's attempt to scientifically understand the social aspects of city walking through personal observation, eventually became part of the "Analytic Studies" in *La Comédie Humaine*.

"[N]ovelists are evangelists of a sort. Balzac knew it in calling himself a 'simple doctor in social medicine'. He shows us how things ought to be in showing us how they are" (Sumberg, 2000, p. 283). In the essay, Balzac identifies twelve axioms to characterize walking. Translation itself, as dependent on language, is laden with the historical moments in and comparative elements of the source and target languages.

As a novice translator, I began the project with a focus on the method of word-for-word translation (Jones, 1997) by utilizing computer software, studying the source language, and gaining moderate reading proficiency in French. I began by converting the French text into English using machine-translation software. I considered this process as a kind of quantizing of the data, converting one language (typically qualitative data subject to interpretation) into another language using a source removed from my input and subjective view.

Word-for-word translation made it possible to preserve the source language word order and translate each word by the most commonly found meanings (Ordudary, 2007). Several procedures helped in the translation of culture-specific terms and concepts in the text such as those found in Balzac's essay. Describing or paraphrasing to evoke a similar meaning, substituting with a word that has a similar effect on the reader, translating by omission, and using a loan word are examples (Baker, 1992; Venuti, 1998). Following Baker (1992), I took the field of discourse, tenor of discourse, and mode of discourse into consideration. As such, reading other works by Balzac written in 1833 (i.e. *Eugénie Grandet* and *The Country Doctor*) and translated by others provided examples that served as a referential backdrop for me in the use of techniques for the translation of *Théorie de la Démarche*.

Initially, I asked myself, “Who am I to even consider a translation of Balzac”? I am an impassioned novice translator. My connection to this project began with the study of ‘*flaneurie*’ in the context of leisure studies and the discovery of this untranslated essay by Balzac on walking several years ago. Translation studies-theory, approaches, ethics-is new to me. I shall explain my rationale for undertaking this challenging task as well as my limitations.

- Authority. My effort toward establishing authority in the translation of the Balzac essay, *A Theory of Walking*, began with a commitment to learn basic French. As a graduate student in Leisure Studies, I completed French 500, 501, 101, and 102 at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. I made several trips to Paris, between winter 2005 and spring 2006, specifically to spend time in the Arcades of Benjamin and to walk where Balzac walked. I studied in several French courses in Paris at Alliance Francaise and received a certificate of completion for the first level of accomplishment. Ultimately, I spent three months living in Paris between December 2006 and March 2007 in order to begin the translation itself while having access to historical and lexical resources at the Bibliotheque Nationale and Bibliotheque Historique and to contextualize the experience of an urban stroller.
- Formal vs. dynamic equivalence. While working on the translation, my internal dialogue reminded me that I was ‘just’ a functional translator (Baker, 1992). I struggled with the language and the English equivalents of words in literary use in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Paris in my attempt to find the most accurate English word equivalent. Reading other Balzac literature and other translators of Balzac helped me to develop my sense of incorporating dynamic equivalence.



- Domesticating vs. foreignizing tone (Ordudary, 2007). As I understood these concepts, I situated myself in the foreignizing camp. I wanted the translation of the essay to reflect the style of 19<sup>th</sup> Century French literature according to Balzac, rather than to accommodate the 20<sup>th</sup> Century reader, as I expected that the translation would draw a select readership and literary reception.
- Remainder. I continued struggling with this throughout the translation process. I understood this concept from Venuti to mean a revealing of underlying elements in a translation that challenged the status quo in terms of language and meaning (Venuti, 1998). The translation is uncooperative with the majority.

Here, I share some of my struggles as an amateur translator with the following passages, which follow a paragraph in which Balzac points out the vulgarity of excessive movement and espouses praise for “the idleness of the Turkish”<sup>18</sup> (Balzac, 1981, p. 298).

The following passage comes from the section of Balzac’s essay in which he is discussing his ‘findings’.

<<pour être heureux, a-t-il dit, il faut tenir peu d' espace, et peu changer de place!>>

“To be happy, it is said, one must hold on to little space, and change place little!”

Donc, la pensée est la puissance qui corrompt notre mouvement, qui nous tord le corps.

Therefore, thought is the power which corrupts our movement, which twists our body,

qui le fait éclater sous ses despotiques efforts. Elle est le grand dissolvant de l' espèce humaine.

<sup>18</sup> *La paresse du turc*, Translation mine.

which shows itself from its tyrannical efforts. It is the great destroyer of the human species.

This passage begins with a quote from Fontenelle, a French poet and mathematician. The sentiment of the quote seems to me to be one in support of Balzac's III axiom, "Tranquility (F. *repose*) exists in stillness of the body". Fontenelle demonstrates the idea of 'repose' as related to one's willingness to choose an uneffusive manner, both in the taking up of space, as well as movement. The translation above struck me as too stiff, too literal. In consideration of Benjamin's ideas on translation, namely kinship and intentionality, the words of the original quote served to adequately signify the words of a syntactic translation (Benjamin, 1955). I acknowledged the layers of difficulty in this instance, to translate the quote from the historical perspective of Fontenelle (in this context, its 'afterlife') while at the same time remembering the layered interpretation of Balzac's intention. The conflict between fidelity and freedom to which Benjamin refers names my struggle.

*Le mouvement humain est comme le style du corps : il faut le corriger beaucoup pour*

Human movement is like the style of the body: one must correct much to

*l'amener à être simple. Dans ses actions comme dans ses idées, l'homme va toujours du*

bring it to simplicity. In his actions as in his thoughts, man always goes from

*composé au simple.*

*mélange* to modest.

The above passage follows a paragraph in the text that contrasts tractable/docile movement with exaggerated/perturbed movement. I found it difficult to translate "*l'amener à être simple*". I translated it literally as, "to bring it to be simple". I decided that "bring it to simplicity" worked

better, even though it seemed awkward or contrived. In keeping with Benjamin's thoughts on the subject of the reader and the translation, in wondering whether I wanted to serve the reader in my effort to translate this passage, I decided that I did care that it is not deemed inessential (Benjamin, 1955). In the ending part of this passage, specifically "*composé au simple*", I chose to translate it as, "*mélange* to modest". I did not feel that the words "compounded" and "simple" reflected the idea of the passage. I liked using another French word to impart the meaning here, even though *mélange* in proper usage is not a modifier (of "man").

Many words used in French have many, many possible meanings dependent on a combination with other words. Another concern I had regarding accuracy in meaning of my translation, related to knowing information about the scientific and literary scholars referenced by Balzac. Examples include: M. Ballanche, Latour-Mezaray, Perrault, M. Mariette, Charles Nodier, Oxenstiern, Champollion, Cuvier, and Herschell all in the first five pages. I felt it is important to truly understand the contextual comparisons Balzac was making. However, after completing the translation, I suggest that knowing these personages lent only tangential information to the theme of the essay.

Maintaining fidelity to a hermeneutic perspective while translating meant foregrounding knowledge of the historical context in which Balzac wrote the essay. A text itself potentially takes on the role of guiding humans in their actions by conferring meaning to them (Angenot, 2004). As an example, Alain de Botton (de Botton, 1997) suggests that Marcel Proust's novels are akin to self-help manuals. Balzac called himself a 'scientist' of walking in *Théorie*, as he chose to place himself on the streets of Paris as a purposeful observer of walking and the social milieu.

'Walking' as it took place in the urban sociology of Balzac, traversed theoretical

contexts of leisure. *Théorie de la Demarche* (Balzac, 1978, 1981), originally published in 1853 by Didier (Paris), contains meandering themes. In terms of making sense of a text, meaning, when relived in the moment of reading and knowledge, comes afterward (Natanson, 1998). Balzac's literary practice of writing with expansive, meticulous detail assists in illustrating to the reader lessons of human experience that embody archetypal wisdom in an everyday 'pedestrian' existence (Farrant, 2002).

*Théorie de la Demarche* highlights topics relevant to the human condition including: beauty, civilization, the body, culture, the everyday, reality, and feeling, all issues relevant to the study of leisure. The essay reveals social and cultural perspectives not previously attributed to the embodied walking landscape and demonstrates relevance to leisure studies scholars and urban planners. Embedded in the slow pace portrayed by Balzac are sensory, fragmentary essences of leisure, a space that enables one to become aware of the experience of time and of being. My goal was to maintain semantic fidelity to Balzacian language usage, such that I could develop interview questions that might open a window for considering the relevance of meaning in urban walking in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century from a historical perspective.

I used my translated English text of Balzac's twelve axioms from *Théorie de la Demarche* to formulate relevant points related to understanding the experience of walking. These included: a walker's characteristics, perception and leisure, as well as the awareness of the bodily experience. I considered this a kind of qualitizing of this data, a way of interpreting the new language structure for the purpose of interviewing subjects. Placing myself in Paris to study French, utilizing resources in the libraries there to obtain a rudimentary historical perspective of Balzac's 19<sup>th</sup> Century city, and engaging with urban walking myself allowed me to turn the machine translation into an equivalent translation. These steps employed the typology of

‘meaning’ as a method for interpretation.

### **The Search for Questions**

Subsequent to completing a translation of the entire essay from French to English, I singled out the 12 axioms as guides for thinking about questions for the interviews. My effort to make sense of the axioms necessitated turning to another kind of translation, namely, determining what I considered as the primary points of the axioms as they related to urban walking. In this type of analysis, concern rests not only with the primary, textual content of the material, it also take into account the context of the information as dormant content (Mayring, 2000). My goal in this portion of the project was concerned less with counting lexical elements of the documents, and concerned more with identifying thematic narratives that illuminated characteristics of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century urban walker and the elemental social structures that made up pedestrian culture of that time. Following Bryman (2004), my exploration involved, “a searching-out of underlying themes in the materials being analyzed...the processes through which the themes are extracted is often left implicit. The extracted themes are usually illustrated- for example with brief quotations” (p. 392). For the purposes of interpreting the Balzac text in this research project, I considered pedestrian culture as the unit of analysis, while the text was the unit of observation (Babbie, 2004).

Language points to meaning; it is what makes it possible for us to comprehend the world we share (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). I ascribe to a qualitative strategy that puts into play the back-and-forth interaction between the data, coding, analysis, coding, and the data. This iterative process for the purposes of this project, reading the text itself and thematic extraction for coding, allowed each element to shape the other (Bryman, 2004). Studying this text required the involvement of both inductive and deductive methods while engaging in the activity of

conceptualization and creation of the code categories (Babbie, 2004). Analysis of any literature, here the Balzac essay, cannot take place without the researcher. Texts are not self-sufficient or self-referential. A work of literature is a practice that contributes to the fabric of social discourse (Natanson, 1998). I used my interpretation of the equivalent translation of the essay and more specifically, the 12 axioms, to develop interview questions for use as a springboard in generating narrative interview data.

## **Data Collection**

**Setting: New York City.** Intending to locate participants who already choose to walk for the pleasure of walking in a fast-paced urban city maintains the research focus on understanding urban pedestrian culture. My rationale for choosing New York City centered on its relative historical similarity as a metropolitan area similar to Balzac's Paris of 1833. In addition, both cities were quintessential modern cities in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and their prominence on the world stage as pedestrian and cultural hubs prevails into the 20<sup>th</sup>. Both New York and Paris have established histories as sites for culture, walking, and watching. I was curious about the perceived lived experience of those who self-identified as walkers against the backdrop of a megalopolis such as New York City.

As the *flâneur* gained literary and literal prominence in Paris in the mid-1800's, American writers attempted to establish the assertion that New York was becoming a place for the spectator. Even if exaggerating it's metropolitan flare at the time, 'would-be'boulevardiers' wrote for the *Knickerbocker*, "the most influential American journal of the 1830's and 1840's" (Brand, 1991, p. 70). Commenting on urban spectatorship associated with the modern European city, Brand (1991) comments,

Before 1835, almost all are set in London or Paris. After 1835, there is a mixture, to the point where New York is unquestionably dominant by the end of the decade. In the

*Knickerbocker*, it is possible to trace the developing self-consciousness of New York as a setting suitable for the *flâneur*. (p.71)

In June of 1835, a serial featuring a *flâneur* who called himself the Leisure Hunter, provided evidence of a city developing a modern sensibility (Brand, 1991). In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the similarities in terms of prominence on the world stage persist to the point of rivalry. I chose New York as a context for the study of urban walking as juxtaposed historically and comparatively to Paris as a walking city.

**Participant selection: purposive sample.** The goal of this phase of the project was to locate and engage with self-identified urban walkers, in order to understand who walks, the reasons for walking, and the experience itself. The two major theoretical axes of IPA relevant to participant selection are: 1) personal experience as meaningful (phenomenology); and 2) participant and researcher engagement in making sense of an experience (hermeneutics) (J. A. Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009b). Historical text and narrative description form the basis for “examining how a phenomenon appears...and making sense of this appearance (J. A. Smith et al., 2009b, p. 28). The focus of inquiry is the particular, detail of reported perspectives of “particular people, in a particular context” (J. A. Smith et al., 2009b, p. 29). For this reason, the participant sample selection in IPA is purposive and sample size is small. This facilitates maintaining focus on the particular experience under study. Purposive sampling in qualitative research “is essentially strategic and entails an attempt to establish a good correspondence between research questions and sampling. In other words, the researcher samples on the basis of wanting to interview people who are relevant to the research questions” (Bryman, 2004, p. 334).

‘New York City walkers’ was the larger pool from which I considered choosing participants for this study. “[T]hey ‘represent’ a perspective, rather than a population” (J. A. Smith et al., 2009b, p. 49). The smaller pool from which I chose five individual participants was

‘writers on urban walking’. This was consistent with IPA guidelines for sample size, which suggests choosing between “three and six participants...for a student project using IPA” (J. A. Smith et al., 2009b, p. 51). This localized grouping of participants placed walking in the specific context of the urban milieu.

The process of selection began with my accidental discovery of an article on walking published in the New York Times. All initial contacts occurred electronically. I contacted the writer of the article by email, as well as other walkers quoted in the article to offer initial information about my research project. Subsequent to receiving email responses indicating interest or disinterest in participating in a follow-up face-to-face interview, I asked for referrals to complete my group of participants. Follow-up contact to schedule interviews in New York City occurred by telephone. Face-to-face interviews following a semi-structured, conversational format completed the data gathering using a schedule (see Figure 1) “to facilitate a comfortable interaction with the participant” (J. A. Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009a, p. 59).

All of the participants in this research, write about, or have written about urban, leisure walking. Single, individual face-to-face interviews occurred between May and December 2008 and were on average one hour and 10 minutes in length. I digitally recorded each interview. All interviewees chose the location and time for their interview. Since all interviews were first meetings, we exchanged information about appearances in a telephone conversation in order to recognize each other at the chosen site. The interviews were recorded using an Olympus LS-10 Linear PCM Recorder. A removable SSD card stored the recorded interviews and was and has been maintained in my possession.



Figure 1

*Interview Questions*

Initial questions:  How long have you been a walker? What is your occupation/career? Describe the kind of walking that you do. When, where, with whom, how long, pace, etc.
What do you know about a person who calls him/herself a ‘walker’? What is most important to you about walking?
What happens when you walk? What are the positives and negatives of walking?
What is most important to you about walking? How does walking fit into your daily life?
What kind of walking do you do? How is this different from other kinds of ‘walks’?
What defines walking? What makes a person a ‘walker’?
Does gender play a part in walking? If so, how?

Since I am a very short middle-aged woman, the participants easily spotted me. Upon meeting and after mutual introductions, I spent several minutes before starting the voice recorder to explain the interview procedure and consent form, answer questions about the consent form, and obtain signatures. This helped to establish common ground for the interview and make the research process transparent. These locations included a personal residence in Brooklyn, Washington Square Park, work place offices in Manhattan, and a bar near the Chelsea Hotel.

Since we had a chance to introduce ourselves and talk briefly before beginning, no names were used during the interview sessions.

The intention of this type of qualitative interviewing design is to remain flexible, iterative, and continuous (J. A. Smith et al., 2009b). I used open-ended questions that reflected themes previously gleaned from Balzac's axioms. I included follow-up questions to probe as needed. A few field notes written after the interviews assisted me in documenting the body language, movement, expressions, feelings, and appearance<sup>19</sup>. The voice recording and subsequent transcription allowed me to safeguard the interviewee's answers as I captured their perceptions of walking in their own words (Bryman, 2004; Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

**Ethical considerations and informed consent.** Perceived risk or danger to participants in this project was low. A description of the study and the protocols were submitted in the Application for Exemption to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved prior to initiating any contact. Following the initial email and telephone conversation, interviewees received a Letter of Introduction, Consent Forms, and Balzac's 12 Axioms, sent electronically, before meeting for the face-to-face interview<sup>20</sup>. All participants agreed to participate voluntarily and signed hard-copy Consent Forms before beginning the semi-structured interview. I answered any questions participants had regarding the research project and confidentiality. I offered to send a copy of the completed study, if requested. All participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason.

As is consistent with IPA research, I remained transparent about my experiences and interest in urban, leisure walking. I shared my experiences of walking in Paris and New York with the participants during the initial introductory phase of the interview.

<sup>19</sup> See Appendix C for the interview aide mémoire

<sup>20</sup> See Appendices B, D, E, and F for IRB attachments

## Introduction of the Participants

James is a man in his twenties, a graduate student at Columbia University. We met near the Alma Mater statue on campus; I walked the 14 blocks from the Hostel on Amsterdam Avenue to meet him. He has a girlfriend. They live in an apartment within walking distance of the university. He publishes information on a website offering historical and logistical information about the streets of New York City because he loves history. He came to walking before moving to New York City while living in New Mexico. He obtained his driver's license 'late' and does not like to drive very much. He told me,

I'm always sort of a tourist always kind of interested in my physical environment and um you know a lot of people they sort of go to a city and you see the greatest hits and you see you know a few sites and then you're kind of done and it's like "now I've seen New York" and now I'm just gonna start walking back and forth or driving back and forth in between my job and home and the grocery store and wherever else and that's gonna become my little loop in the city and I'm not gonna, people aren't interested in seeing anything other than that in the city. But I'm...I just always keep going. I guess when I get to a new place, and I'm very interested in what the buildings look like, what the streets look like, what the people look like in a place, and why the buildings were built in the first place, and what they're used for now, and, um what a park looks like. All these different things, um, um I'm always curious. I guess that curiosity never, never stops.

He considers himself an informal preservationist of sorts. He researches historical information about the streets of New York with the hope that the information inspires the virtual onlooker to, "think of walking as anything other than getting from point A to point B...inspire."

Mary is a woman in her fifties, married with two dogs. [She excitedly pulled out her iPhone and showed me photos of her dogs at one point in the interview.] We met to talk in a Manhattan public park; I walked more than 100 blocks from the hostel to get there in preparation for our talk. A jazz band was playing in the park that morning. She publishes a weekly blog describing her experiences in encountering the sites and histories on the ground when walking the streets of New York. She came to walking after moving to New York City from Texas in

2006 and recognizing that she wanted to get in shape. She decided to take a notebook to write about her experiences and sketch. This turned into a meaningful experience for her:

...the meanings of the walk for me maybe became a means of exploration. And so the writing the writing of my website came out of me showing my journal of my sketches of people on benches in New York and my thoughts about a certain building, I showed it to an to an older artist friend and he said that “you need to put that on the internet”. And so I started transcribing my experiences and then I began to realize this is what I want to do I want to walk to explore about myself and to find out about my environment and it connected me in a new way to the city. And it connected me in a very um strong way.

She hopes to reach virtual onlookers who are adventurous, who want to explore the city on their own, and get away from the Grayline tour busses.

Michael is a man in his sixties, married with grown children. I took the subway from the Hostel on Amsterdam to Chambers Street then walked the rest of the way, about three miles across the Brooklyn Bridge, to his home. We were frequently interrupted by the ringing telephone, which he could not bear to let ring. He teaches and writes essays and books on the urban milieu. He has published several articles and books specifically about walking. He came to walking as a young man, because it was a way to escape his family and explore New York City. He recognizes the deep literary influences on his viewpoints about walking and his love of walking. He locates the experience of walking in its groundedness:

Apollinaire thought that you know, walked around ... and Gertrude Stein was the same way she walked around and would compose her long paragraphs in *The Making of Americans* while walking around Paris and Apollinaire composed his poems the same way so one thing that interested me... that I've really been interested in for want of a better word, endlessness which is procedures that threaten or provoke the writer by not seeming to conclude in any logical manner... And I've always been very interested in the progression between inner and outer. My gut religion is that the consolation [?] of the material world is the closest I come to spirituality so I've never been drawn to transcendence or to the unseen, rather I have taken my consolation from the concreteness of things the materiality of things the endurance of things.

He wants to reach people who actually read books. He goes on book tours and gives talks around the country. From this he hopes to share his views in a way that reaches people to consider

walking as a meaningful perambulation offering opportunities for awareness, acceptance, and appreciation for beauty.

Leo is a man in his forties, married with children. We met at his office in Manhattan. I walked a leisurely 80 blocks to get there. I needed a security guest pass to go up to his office that had a breathtaking, panoramic view North across Manhattan. He recently moved to a Long Island community after residing in Manhattan for a number of years. He is also recovering from a recent knee surgery, which has limited his walking. He works in Manhattan for a city government related to construction and oversight of housing and infrastructure projects. He was interviewed by a reporter from the New York Times for an article on walking. Initially, he came to walking as a boy out of necessity. His parents took him to parks and historic sites and encouraged him to look around, gather information about his environment, history, and nature.

His early influences carried forward:

As I got older of course we made our way all the way around it [a state park] and there was a nature trail on the far side and there were some historic interpretive signs and at one point to describe the industry that had flourished there and it was just part of what we did was to do these long walks and then as I got older, and got to my HS, I continued to do those types of things even though it was sort of uncool cause I was a teenager and my parents were [aliens?] at that point. But to get from where my HS was situated in our town into the downtown area you had to walk, it was probably less than a 10 minute walk, but there were all these streets you could go on cause it was a grid, just like here in NY. And I would take different routes you could go to the parks that were down by the river and I would meet my friends and we'd walk to so-and-so's house and go here and there and then go back to school and then got on the bus and went home. It was just part of what we did and, maybe it's because few of us had cars, I mean my older brother had a car, but most people didn't we didn't drive all that much, so I would do these walks and it was really not outside the realm of reality for us, for my friends and I to say let's just walk all the way up to the park over here or go this way or go that way. So it stayed as a part of my life.

He recognizes the importance of walking and reading about walking in its ability to influence awareness of one's personal connections to people and place.

Lee is a man in his thirties, with a partner and one child, who lives in a borough of

New York City. We met to talk at a bar with a band playing on West 23<sup>rd</sup> Street near the historic Chelsea Hotel; he had wanted to tell me about the historic, literary significance of the place. Dylan Thomas lived there, as did Jack Kerouac. Arthur C. Clarke wrote *2001: A Space Odyssey* there. He walks to see different things. He loves the buildings and sees more when on foot. His appreciation for walking and perceived lack of resources for visitors to New York City interested in literary sites, developed into researching, developing, and publishing an online reference site for walking tourists. He became aware of the need for this when planning to show a niece the sites during a visit just after the attack on the World Trade Center:

...she was sort of a she likes to read, she's a reader, and so I thought I could show her, sort of the literary sites of Greenwich village and uh, but I couldn't find like a guidebook that had everything that I wanted on it, so I started taking these guidebooks and making lists of addresses from them thinking I could like use them as a list [to show them] and as I was doing this, I started thinking, this list could be a website and I got the idea of linking them crosswise so you could sort of wander through the website like you were wandering the streets...It seemed like a way to, you know, preserve NY, Kind of keep it safe, not just from Al Qaeda, but from the forces of development that are constantly erasing and rewriting NY...

He hopes to draw attention to random historical, literary sites in order to preserve them. There is something meaningful in experiencing the city at ground level.

## **Analysis**

Following IPA research methods for data collection, data analysis included: 1) recording the semi-structured interviews; 2) transcribing the interviews; 3) reading the interviews to look for themes and subthemes; and 4) field notes from my own walking experiences in Paris, New York City, and Urbana, Illinois. I initiated this process by reading one interview several times, immersing myself in the data. The initial reading aimed at getting an overall sense of the content of the interview. According to Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009), the second reading examines

the data more closely, paying attention to semantic content and language. “This process ensures a growing familiarity with the transcript, and, moreover, it begins to identify specific ways by which the participant talks about, understands, and thinks about an issue (J. A. Smith et al., 2009a, p. 83).

I used the right-hand margin to write down initial comments from the date and the left-hand margin to write initial interpretations about what said. At this same time, I sent an electronic copy of the transcripts of the interviews in an email to my advisor, Dr. Laura Payne who read the transcripts independently. In this peer review, she also made notations and highlighted sections of the interviews. Subsequent to our independent readings, we met several times to discuss the initial coding of themes, as well as to compare and contrast our interpretations of the transcript data.

After that initial coding, I read through all transcripts a third time, this time writing theme titles in the right-hand margin, and I underlined phrases in the text that captured the quality of those themes. Then I listened to the recorded audio of the interview while following the physical text of the transcription. This helped me make connections to what I had noticed and written in my brief field notes and to make any clarifying comments in the transcript. In the next step, I developed a list from each transcript of conceptual comments that I used to initiate and code emergent themes. I then began to look for connections between them.

This analysis was “iterative and involve[d] a close interaction between reader and text” (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 72). The next stage involved producing a table of the themes in a coherent order. Abstraction and subsumption follow as processes to form identifying patterns between noted themes that lead to super-ordinate themes and bring together any related themes to support the super-ordinate theme, respectively (J. A. Smith et al., 2009a). The goal here is to

cluster sub-themes with superordinate themes, and then add an identifier (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008). The identifier allowed me to find original text sources to support the themes in the transcription.

The next step in the analysis involved finding transcript extracts to support the themes. Although I conducted the initial reading and coding using hard copies of the transcripts, in this phase of analysis I conducted the process of commenting and thematizing on the computer. I read through and highlighted specific comments relevant to the themes. I then transferred the extracts in the body of the transcript to a separate list through the process of cutting and pasting. Once I had a list of extracts from the transcript of each participant, I again returned to using hard copies in order to lay them side-by-side and look for patterns across cases. I made notations in the margins as to theme relevance each extract. I kept all hard copies, notes, and electronic information outlined above as evidence of an audit trail. The results of this analytic process are presented in the next chapter.

### **Quality Criteria**

Validity and reliability are common criteria useful in assessing the quality of research in quantitative inquiry, and suggest observing or measuring what you say you are and whether it can be replicated or agreed upon by more than one observer or researcher, respectively. For the qualitative researcher, these concepts prove less relevant as they seem absolute and “carry connotations of measurement” (Bryman, 2004, p. 272).

For the purposes of this research project, I began with valuing commonly used criteria, namely trustworthiness and authenticity (Guba, 1981; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln, 1995). These concepts hold as effective ways to evaluate research that does not result in quantified data. Following is a brief explanation of these concepts forwarded by Lincoln and Guba.



Trustworthiness subsumes four criteria (Bryman, 2004, p. 273):

- a) *credibility*, which parallels internal validity;
- b) *transferability*, which parallels external validity;
- c) *dependability*, which parallels reliability;
- d) *confirmability*, which parallels objectivity.

Credibility involves establishing evidence that demonstrates a match between the findings of the research and reality (Shenton, 2004). Peer scrutiny assists in establishing credibility. I sought review of the transcripts and exchange of ideas regarding themes between my advisor and myself. Each individual question and answer style, transcribed interview was emailed to a participant as an editable Microsoft Word ® attachment with an invitation to review the content of the transcription and confirm it as accurate to their personal walking narrative or to make revisions or additions. Two participants returned the transcripts with spelling or street number corrections. The remaining transcripts remained unchanged (Appendices H-L).

Transferability in the case of qualitative research takes into consideration “depth rather than breadth” of the presented data (Bryman, 2004, p. 275). Guba and Lincoln argue that thick description (Geertz, 1973) forms a basis for discerning applicability to a broader group. Including quotes from the interviews attempts to offer a perspective from which to know how individuals see the world and whether there is commonality to a larger group. Dependability requires that there is an accessible audit trail sufficient to “establish how far proper procedures are being and have been followed” (Bryman, 2004, p. 275). Confirmability assumes that the researcher has kept his or her biases out of the research to minimize influencing outcomes. “[T]he researcher can be shown to have acted in good faith” (Bryman, 2004, p. 276).

In research that leans toward Creative Analytic Practice (CAP), I agree with Parry (2007) that even these criteria become problematic. Therefore, in this research I consider including additional ways for evaluating and interpreting research that employs CAP values of quality suggested by Richardson (1997, 2000). These include (Richardson cited in Parry & Johnson, 2007):

- a) substantive contribution of the text-it contributes to understanding from a human perspective;
- b) aesthetic merit of the text-it invites and encourages the audience to form their own interpretations;
- c) reflexivity-clarity regarding how the text was created by the researcher;
- d) impact of the text-the reading of the text generates new questions or motivates new practices; and
- e) the text expresses a reality that conveys an “embodied sense of lived experience” (p.126).

It is my intention and hope that the analysis and presentation of the findings in the next chapter accomplishes those tasks.

## **Conclusion**

Exploring and experiencing the common-sense world delineated by “pedestrian culture” may reveal leisure values that serve as mitigating influences to the social coercion of participation in a consumer culture that blinds us to consider alternatives to car culture.

Humans are variable, unpredictable, and dynamic. By choosing research in the phenomenological tradition, I hope to examine not just what I perceive when I look at a particular walker, but the broader essence of walkers and the act of perceiving them. Following

that, this project turns to phenomenology in the study of social reality as it lives in literary text, a relatively untapped source of data in research in the Leisure Studies field, as a source for analysis. Literary prose, coupled with information obtained from participant observation and interviews, intends to bring to light the physiognomy of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century leisure walker and its relevance to meaning in 20<sup>th</sup> Century urban pedestrian culture.

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

It is extraordinary to see that, since the time when man walked, no one may have asked why he walks, how he walks, if he walks, if he could walk better, what he does while walking, if there was not a way to prescribe it, to change it, to analyze his walk; questions which engage all philosophical, psychological, and political systems that occupy the world<sup>21</sup>.

N' est-il pas réellement bien extraordinaire de voir que, depuis le temps où l' homme marche, personne ne se soit demandé pourquoi il marche, comment il marche, s' il marche, s' il peut mieux marcher, ce qu' il fait en marchant, s' il n' y aurait pas moyen d' imposer, de changer, d' analyser sa marche : questions qui tiennent à tous les systèmes philosophiques, psychologiques et politiques dont s' est occupé le monde? (Balzac, 1981, p. 260).

### Introduction

This chapter puts into words the findings of this phenomenological study of leisure walking that considered the perceived walking experiences of five New York City residents beginning with the historical context of an 1833 French essay on walking. This research sought to gain understanding of the perceptions of walkers who choose walking for its own sake even while in the contested pedestrian space of a densely populated, gridlocked, metropolitan area. The research questions outlined in Chapter 1 intending to probe the relevance of historic literature on walking, in conjunction with the perceived experience of walking, and meaning placed on walking by the walker, served to guide the analysis of interviews on the phenomenon of walking that follows.

Balzac's 1833 translated essay on walking discussed in Chapter 2, *Théorie de la Démarche*, or A Theory of Walking, as well as transcribed interviews from New York City walkers stand as the data sources for this research project. Data were analyzed using the multi-directional, iterative and inductive cycles of engagement, reduction, expansion, revision, and

<sup>21</sup> Translation mine

creativity consistent with Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (J. A. Smith et al., 2009a) and detailed in Chapter 3. This process concentrated impressions from the data into three super-ordinate themes, each with two subthemes, described below.

Five city walkers participated in the co-production of recorded, semi-structured interviews between May and December 2008. The twelve axioms gleaned from Balzac's essay included as Appendix A, used to craft the interview questions for this mixed methods research project, were emailed to the participants in advance of the face-to-face interviews. This provided the participants with the same historical, background literature that informed me in the beginning phase of this project.

My repeated, reflective engagement with the essay on walking and the tangible, expressed accounts of the participant's experiences of city walking, resulted in the emergent identification of three super-ordinate themes germane to the research questions. The first research question – (1) what can literature 'do' in the quest for knowledge of the lived experience of leisure? – reconciles with the theme, *the body reads and writes literary realities*. The second research question – (2) how do mind and body manifest in the individual experience of walking? – reconciles with the theme, *movement connects inner and outer materialities*. The third research question – (3) what is the perceived lived experience of city walking? – reconciles with the theme, *walking subsumes meaningful experiences*. The discussion of each of these super-ordinate themes includes a discussion of two sub-themes. The table below shows the super-ordinate themes and related subthemes.

Figure 2

*Themes*

<b>Super-ordinate Themes</b>	<b>Subthemes</b>
1. The body reads and writes literary realities	1a. Reflexive narratives
	1b. Aesthetic form
2. Movement connects inner and outer materialities	2a. Embodied sensibility
	2b. Temporal foregrounding
3. Walking subsumes meaningful experiences	3a. Appropriation
	3b. Wonderment

Excerpts from the English translation of Balzac's essay and the participant interview transcripts serve to illustrate the emergence of the above named themes and the findings. Pseudonyms are used when directly quoting from the transcript. Ellipses are used in direct quotations when words are left out of a quotation.

**Theme 1: The Body Reads and Writes Literary Realities**

This theme begins with the conception that walking shows and tells. When considering city walking, analysis of the interview data gave rise to ideas about walking that illustrated a mutual appreciation by the participants for the conception that literature, specifically perambulating written works on/in walking, hold potential for opening a person up to him or herself and to others by virtue of the encounter, in the context of language. This is harmonious with ideas postulated in Balzac's 12 axioms. From the outset, I found that the axioms yielded two primary thematic readings, one that centered on the transparency of characteristics of a

person in their walk, and another that focused on the aesthetic qualities related to the bodily form in movement. The participants voiced analogous ideas about a literary walking voice that reflected the evident themes from Balzac.

All participants discussed authors and literature that they felt provided background perspective to their experience of walking and connected them to the city. Statements made during the interviews by the participants supported the potentiality of a text in taking on the role of guiding humans in their actions by presenting meaning, or eliciting mood, climate, atmosphere, and memory related to perceptions of leisure and noticed in walking. They expressed recognition of the revelatory and aesthetic possibilities inherent to walking.

Following the reading and recognition of the relevance of literary realities to the participants, two subthemes emerged: a) walking as self-reflexive narrative; and b) walking as an aesthetic form. In the first subtheme, walking acts as a physical language that heightens awareness to noticing tangible, personality expressions and intangible character of a person. It also affords the opportunity to ‘read’ the environment and ‘write’ the ever-changing experiences in everyday life. In the second subtheme, the walk can be read as an experience rife with aesthetic beauty in movement and creativity in thought. I walk <myself>. Words reflect the world back to us, just as walking inscribes us onto it.

### **Sub-Theme 1a: Reflexive narrative**

Walking tells something. The body articulates language. Reflexivity in this context of walking is embodied knowing and telling, a corporeal narrative of self. What we see in others reflects and speaks to us about ourselves. In considering the ‘walk’ during the interviews, participants realized it as a physical communication, a non-verbal story in daily behavior that holds potential for knowing and revelation. This act can be ‘read’ by others. The body narrates

characteristics of the self through walking just as language narrates recollection of the experience in telling. The city talks back when feet touch the sidewalk. The participants spoke of the influence of perambulating literature on one's being in the world. They could 'read' other people in their walk. They could read the literary sidewalk of writers who had been there before.

Honoré de Balzac, a revered 19<sup>th</sup> Century writer, was a keen observer and wrote about walking as "'movement' understood as 'thought'" (Balzac, 1981, p. 270). He believed that characteristics of one's identity are inscribed in the walk and can be revealed and re-written. This is evident in his theory of walking from the following axioms: I. the walk is the physiognomy of the body (Balzac, 1981, p. 280); V. any jerked movement belies an imperfection or unwholesome education (Balzac, 1981, p. 284); and XII. excessive movement is utterly portentous (Balzac, 1981, p. 293). He thought of walking as an involuntary telegraphing of one's thoughts and intentions through action. "Who of us thinks of going while going? No one. Much more, each of us glorifies walking in thought" (Balzac, 1981, p. 283).

Of the participants, Mary spoke of the ways the body in walking can be read to formulate attribution of specific character qualities to people in observing their walks. She notices the "...confidence in people walking in boots...uptight, clipped, anxious, hurried walk of the busy professional." The other participants seemed to defer the question about what might be known about a person by observing their walk. They singled out only the walk of the 'tourist' as telling something particular about individuals.

In observing the crowd, James notices tourists because, "they don't know how to walk." Lee thinks that, "tourists walk more recreationally." Michael finds that tourists move their necks and eyes differently than native New Yorkers because, "they're trying to take in everything."



Leo believes that he could identify a tourist's walk because they look up. He said, "they're the smart ones...looking up and seeing what little gems can be found."

In listening to or reading about the telling of a walking narrative, the listener/reader reflexively identifies with it. Michael recognizes the importance of the reflexivity within him in reading literature that fosters cultural understanding of others. He opens the door for the influence of literature on his willingness to amble through unfamiliar neighborhoods in the city, to taking in reality, to change the way he sees the world and the people in it. He suggested that words humanize strangers and walking encompasses that common human relationship:

I think that of course literature has the ability to change people. It produces a lot of different models of behavior and in so doing, ideally increases our tolerance our sense that maybe there is another reason another way of looking at things...[L]iterature brings us closer to understanding people...So I think literature increases our capacity to absorb reality...the other capacity is to nurture our sense of beauty just a painting does or music does, an appreciation of form, an appreciation of an elegant language.

Michael also feels that writing itself is considered a way of moving around an idea or a subject.

As an essayist in his own right, He went on to talk about his own writing as having an effect on others:

...the essay is a kind of walk a perambulation around a subject...to connect with others and to communicate what I can't communicate otherwise in daily conversation, a level of intimacy or confidingness...in my writing, I can be more unbuttoned, I can be more open.

Mary related a story of the impact of her own writing on one of the readers of her literary walking blog:

...one of the nicest letters I got recently was from a woman who has MS and she's confined to a wheelchair and said that my blog freed her...she felt like she could leave her chair.

She believes that her writing touches her readers and that in turn touches her.

Leo talked about the way the experience of walking enlarges his world. To him, literature and walking in New York City create an intersubjective way of knowing oneself through people and words:

...there were just all these sort of connections ... between people and between what we do in literature, it was just fascinating...literature, in so many ways is a reflection...it might reflect what we see, but we are also viewing it through someone else.

James, Mary, and Michael all talked about the literary type of the *flâneur* as part of the present day fabric of the New York City crowd. James commented about noticing the strolling *flâneur* in Soho:

I was just in Soho yesterday and there's a lot of strolling around looking in shops, but you know, like the *flâneur*...in Soho, that's definitely what's happening...people seeing and being seen and shopping...And it's a much slower pace.

Mary excitedly told me that a friend recognized her walking persona as fitting the reflexive walk of the *flâneur*. She said, "I created this walking self...and having a dear friend say, making the *flâneur* connection...he called me a *flâneurette*...someone who is a bit there to be seen too. As well as to look out, to observe."

Michael felt that the *flâneur* exists and that the male dominant sexualized gaze of the *flâneur* is thwarted in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century New York City due to technology. The opportunities for locking eyes with a passing attractive female happens less and less:

*Flâneurie* in the 19<sup>th</sup> century sense, probably has been modified. I noticed for instance recently that, this will sound like a terrible generalization, but the prettier a woman is the more she is apt to be on a cell phone... they're hiding behind these cell phones and text messages as a way for them not to have to deal with the amorous glances of everyone who passes their way. So that's a new wrinkle in *flâneurie*.

They believe that language holds promise in revealing meaning in the ordinary lived experience of walking. Words can 'touch'.

### **Sub-Theme 1b: Aesthetic form**

Walking shows something. Aesthetically, walking was described as possessing beauty and rhythmic qualities. Balzac identified particular qualities of movement that took on artistic form and aesthetic value. He particularly honed in on the gracefulness of slow movement in walking and the inherent calmness that accompanies that gracefulness. He indicated this in the following three axioms: III. tranquility is in stillness of the body; IV. slow movement is of itself sublime; and VI. beauty requires rounded form.

Aesthetic form in this sense centered on flowing motion and economy of movement with the intention of “reclaim[ing] walking as noble and gracious” (Balzac, 1981, p. 283). He contrasted this to the walk of an obese person who, “...is necessarily forced to give oneself over to disagreeable movement breaching harmony by his belly which bears sway.” (Balzac, 1981, p. 286). He believed that a person could choose to adopt and practice movement to model a type, “...a man who has time to himself, leisure, consequently a wealthy man, noble, thinker, a wise man...then gesture will be less frequent and slow...” (Balzac, 1981, p. 284). Ultimately, he believed that balanced, slow, and harmonious gestures in walking had the ability to improve one’s health and quality of life.

Mary identifies with and finds value in Balzac’s axioms based on her own knowledge as an art historian, as well as her observations and experiences of walking in New York. She stated:

To read about tranquility, and the sublime, slow movement. I relate to, “slow movement is of itself sublime.” Sublime is I think as an art historian, has a very definite meaning of the phrase. The sublime is what transcends words. But I like that, that sense of slow movement, and tranquility, and it seems a good way to counteract the frenzied excess.

She was the only participant who seemed to have read the axioms that were forwarded prior to the interview and who formed an opinion about their significance.

However, the others voiced awareness of their own walking as possessing a rhythmic form, an aesthetic quality, and felt that subscribing to it presents opportunities to be present in the walk and engaged with their surroundings. James spoke of his experience of walking as a reflexive, rhythmic act. He notices that it fosters engagement with the environment that made him aware of connections between himself and others.

He stated:

I got into sort of a deep rhythm of the walk where I was doing it very regularly, um there became a rhythm of going out and setting out every day to walk. And then there's the rhythm of the walking itself I think? Um, I don't know, somehow it became very familiar and very um ... like a comfortable state of being... I mean to walk down a street as opposed to driving down a street you're definitely engaged with the people in a way that you're not um otherwise.

Mary recognizes variations in rhythm when she observes the walks of others. She talked about awareness of her own walking rhythm and the realization that her personal values show in her own walking:

...you can see that everyone has a different pace and rhythm... I became real fascinated by that rhythm of people walking... I feel my time on earth is valuable to me. And I like, would like to control my own pace and rhythm and not have it determined by others. And so, I value, I value other people and the earth. And I value freedom... I think someone who walks is committing, well, has, probably is willing to test, test boundaries.

She went on to talk about her own experience with a drama coach who taught 'walking' as part of an actor's character development. She recognizes the apparent practice of Balzac's axioms and the impact of the changes in herself when she pays attention to the way she walks. She commented on her experience as one of his students:

...his school of training actors was to say that every character has a rhythm and their rhythm is manifested in their walking... you could alter your own rhythms... taught all these actors about these theories of rhythm and the human body and physiognomy and walking... More slow movement. And, that helped me so much. And it affected the way I walked; it gave me a stronger sense of control. And so, I'm aware that if I am anxious, I will walk faster. I believe everyone walks differently.

Michael commented on the rhythm of New York City as a palpable element of the fabric of the city. In the ebb and flow of the crowd, he locates himself as part of that shared rhythm and recognizes the significance of being part of the crowd:

I think the rhythm of NY is a walking rhythm, a purposeful rhythm, not a slow rhythm. I think that when you walk in the streets you filter out, you filter in danger, you see something is coming at you... it's a way of just checking in on your fellow man.

## **Theme 2: Movement Connects Inner and Outer Materialities**

When considering the context of city walking, a reading of the interview data suggests that walking holds potential for evoking the *mémoire involuntaire* (Runia, 2006) that connects the mix of material and ephemeral worlds encountered while walking. The grounded act of moving through/in the environment reflexively elicits tangible awareness of and physical connection to matters of the body, memory, and the senses through the constant oscillation between internal-external essences. I sensed tangible essences of the city, as well as the significance of noticing my connection to it when I walked in New York as written in my May 2008 notes:

New York is a landscape dominated by walkers. In some ways, the parks seem redundant as the walking 'trails' are concrete, paved walkways, palimpsest for all that is New York City. The living city turned inward long ago. Circulation by sidewalk, tunnel, and thoroughfare around Central Park. The periphery serving a perfunctory purpose for going by, moving through, sailing away. The parks adorn the living city of New York. Are they essential? The pulse of feet on pavement echo in the canyons of Central Park. But one must always turn outward from this center-life is out there. There is something almost eerie, surreal when walking in the park.

Participants voiced sensing and noticing immediate and fleeting visual, tactile, olfactory, and auditory essences while walking that stimulated and dynamically connected memories with perceptions, and feelings with the body. Following the above reading of presentness in walking from the participant interviews, two subthemes emerged: a) embodied sensibilities, and b) temporal foregrounding. Sensibilities are ways of understanding things, generated from a kind of

receptiveness that lends itself to awareness of the self in connection to the world. Here, I recognize temporal foregrounding as an articulation of fleeting, material realities such that the familiar, taken-for-granted world is perceived in relief and made strange to the point of sudden awareness.

### **Sub-Theme 2a: Embodied Sensibilities**

The participants voiced awareness of a tangible presentness in walking that materializes into two identifiable sensibilities: 1) spatial and 2) perceptive. A spatial sensibility here has to do with the lived experience of movement of the body in space and the production of conscious, tangible relationships to the world and the things in it. The lived experience takes shape as reality while walking. A perceptive sensibility here suggests fluid sensation, something felt, an elicitation of feeling. This characterizes knowing when something outside touches a walker literally or figuratively.

Spatial sensibility described by the participants focused on awareness of the mind-body relationship to the history of the city. Everyone in the study clearly and repeatedly voiced cognizance of tangible historical moments. Walking seems to find a way of revealing what came before and carries weight as a way of producing substantive lived experience. People, buildings, and events in history become tangible.

All of the participants notice and appreciate the importance of their connection to the history of the built environment and the layered evidence of a historic presence in the city as they walk by places associated with authors and events. Their feet seem to play a part in touching the past and making the history of New York tangible. Leo talked of learning of a connection to and appreciation of the historic city early in his life:

My parents encouraged us in so many ways, and I'm very thankful to them, my mother especially for encouraging interests in the world around us, history and nature and the

[built?] environment, the natural environment... we would go for these walks... realized that I was doing something that was part of something bigger... the act of walking was part of the experience, because it was from my own two feet.

Lee stated he notices the layered histories of the tangible environment everywhere and the feeling attached to his experience:

The Washington Irving House...Oscar Wilde... interesting things that have happened on the streets...there's a quality of sort of valuing...change in time and the eclecticism of NY that's part of, NY is like history...the thing that comes on the next street will be meaningful in some way... I love places that have two or more equally unrelated associations.

Michael also recognizes the importance of history and his tangible connection to it:

...there is this sense in walking that you know the soles of your feet will tell you where to go; that they have their own minds...walking has this dimension of history, history is very important. The older I get the more I'm interested in history, and when I walk around NYC, I see ghosts of earlier places, earlier situations. Edgar Allen Poe knew Nathaniel Parker Willis, Walt Whitman, Willa Cather... I saw that there were these connections. That's thrilling, but also you get this sense of accidental connections between people and you imagine that you that history is not just something in the abstract. That it is something real... infrastructure, that's also part of the sense of history and the sense of depth... you discover that there were cobble stones and flag stones and things like that, that the sidewalk has actually been at different levels.

Mary thinks of layers of literary history as written, read, and re-written while on the sidewalk. She recognizes the sidewalk palimpsest reflecting the writings of previous literary figures during her walks:

...walking through the streets became a mirror of the tangential mental processes that I was exploring. And so, it became such a series of revelations that I just found myself walking and writing and walking and writing and observing and thinking about the layers of history and the present city...I found myself having conversations with Georgia O'Keefe, and Mabel Dodge Luhan, and Greta Garbo...and reacting to the literary history of the street.

James recognizes the nearness of history and the way it draws him in to the tangible landscape when he walks:

Well it's definitely like a whole body mind kind of experience being out on the streets...And in New York there's so many famous things and amazing historical things and just every day historical things have happened here in such close proximity to each

other than any block, any walk down any pretty much random block if you do your homework on it there's gonna be something that happened there of historical significance or if not that just it's interesting one after the other, after the other. So yeah that definitely engages me.

Perceptive sensibility connects to the participant's memory, sensations, and feelings as evidence. As a writer, Michael is aware of the multitude of sensory inputs when walking and the dynamic nature of those inputs to take on a variety of connotations. Language has limits, but the experience of walking is limitless in New York City:

If you write a short story about the summer when you lost your virginity or whatever, there's an ending. But on a walk, you perceive so many things, how do you know how to shape it? So, it's very promising and also daunting... the world presented itself in ever changing forms as I was walking through it...it happens to be a place that offers up continuously changing sensations.

Leo is aware of actual sensory essences touching him as he walks through the neighborhoods on a familiar walk between his workplace and 14<sup>th</sup> street:

I think beyond people, it is the shops, a lot of it is olfactory, it's the scents...smells like toast when you walk by...flower shops...wave of scents...fish market... So it's the things I can smell, it's the people that I see. If I have company, it's the conversation. I notice my pace... I notice things like buildings... I always have an eye out on development... so it's kind of a funny sort of urban scavenger hunt that I do in the back of my head. It's almost like I play...I make mental notes to them and add to the experience.

Mary cherishes the walks home from work as a way to gradually move through the day. It places her in awareness of a sensory present. She notices the touches afforded by the natural environment, "I can experience the day, and the light, and the sunshine, and the trees, and hear the sounds of the street. And this is a very beautiful town."

### **Sub-Theme 2b: Temporal Foregrounding**

Foregrounding is used in art and literature as a technique whereby something stands out against the background, such that attention is drawn to something that then becomes palpable to reception. "To 'foreground' is to bring something into prominence such that it stands out from



the background, which makes it dominant in perception” (Mukarovsky as cited in Abrams & Harpham, 2009, p. 127). Another intention of foregrounding in literature is to “renew the reader’s lost capacity for fresh sensation” by defamiliarizing the world of everyday perception (Shklovsky as cited in Abrams & Harpham, 2009, p. 127).

I expand this to the leisure walker who perambulates the city, at a slower pace. The deliberate, slow pace is an instrument that creates opportunities for a reading of the city that brings small details into focus against the phantasmagoric backdrop of buildings, crowds, noise, and automobiles. The minutiae of everyday historical, sensory, and rhythmic moments are brought to awareness and connect the moving body to the material realities of lived experience.

Leo talks about his love of walking and “*the romance with wherever I am.*” He recognizes that slowing down uncovers awareness of aesthetic possibilities in the midst of and despite the rush of the city lifestyle. Leo described his frustration when needing to finish some Christmas shopping and in the rush of this task, recognizing that he valued the slow pace:

But, I think that NY, in some ways, that image of NY as the city that never sleeps which is true, but, just the city that everyone is always running to and fro, in so many ways, the real delights and pleasures of NY come when you slow down and you stop. The truth is, a really slow walk is the best thing. I mean maybe even just sitting somewhere watching the world go by is wonderful.

When comparing the choice of touring New York City on a bus or by walking, Lee recognizes the limitations imposed by a bus tour guide who decides who decides the pace for you. He stated:

When I think of walking I think there’s something unique about it, because you could take a tour bus, take a walking tour...in the tour bus you have to learn it at bus speed...[walking] you can stop and absorb...

He is also aware of the pace in New York City as a place that privileges commerce at the expense of historically significant buildings. He recognizes the interaction of the slower

movement in walking and the impact on the way time is perceived. For him it creates a three-dimensional sense of time that returns to valuing history:

...it's a sense of like the depth of time and like there's a sort of like horizontal time and vertical time, it's like the time of typically walking the street and then the time of you can go from, and it's the same address, from like Thomas Payne to you know, 50's Jazz artists, and a sense of... NY it's like it's a commercial city and unfortunately we don't tend to respect the past so much...

Michael, having a sense of the historical background layering New York City, feels that the slower pace of walking foregrounds the present against the past. With this juxtaposition comes the feeling of a sense of loss when one becomes aware of what is found as one walks down the block. Michael recognizes this by saying:

When you walk around you can't help but take in new buildings where old ones used to be. So you are much more in touch with your memory and the stages in your life...you are walking around and you see sometimes wonderful buildings and you feel, at least I feel, both drawn to them and resentful that I have to look at them...something else used to be there... You know you are a New Yorker when you have that sense of nostalgia and loss.

Lee senses the loss of a city filled with diverse people and projects. Slowing down brings the landscape into relief against progress. He expresses hope in continuing to value historical landmarks by doing his part in raising awareness with his mapping project to preserve them. He stated:

Jane Jacobs... she talks about how you need old buildings for new ideas...walking by them is an experience whereas walking by a strip mall is not an experience... I sort of hope to by alerting people to some of the history I hope to put some sand in the wheels of, I don't have a lot of illusions for how easy to be, like to put up a website to stop a developer from making a 100,000,000 profit on a building.

I have felt a relationship between walking and preserving history while walking from the University of Illinois campus one day:

I was thinking while on my walk home from campus about urban walking as a kind of historic preservation, Not in the nostalgic sense-'the good old days' of walking are fraught with dirt, danger, and destitution-but in the sense of reclaiming the body in time

and space to preserve the origins of travel or of leisure. Walking ‘acts’ the historic preservation of leisure.

Several of the participants talked about the way that the walking pace opens them up to actually seeing things in a new way, to making the familiar strange. James’ experience exemplifies this way of noticing the influence of slowing down on perception, the interaction of time and space, and defamiliarization. He expressed this in his description of a city walk:

...why I did the walk... It was about re-looking at my environment and trying to see things with, with fresh eyes and trying to see things not in the same way you always see them, and so to force yourself to walk down some random street that you would never walk down before sort of forces you to into this re-looking. It’s like “ok, here I am, I’m on this street” you know “what’s here, what is there to look at, why is this street here, why is it important.

He went on to emphasize the significance of actually ‘seeing’ the world and the impact on his quality of life:

It has something to do with keeping me engaged with, I don’t know, the amazingness of life, or something like that. Um um cause you can get sort of inured to that or numb to what life has to offer. And I always think of um another analogy that I think of it as a fresh snowfall. You’ve been in, you’ve been on your street a million times and then you open the door and there’s a fresh snowfall and it’s like magic fairy land. But it’s not, it’s just the same street, you’re just seeing the same familiar things with new eyes because it looks different. It’s the same but different you know.

Mary becomes more aware of the landscape by virtue of taking the slower pace of walking on a dedicated, shared bicycle-pedestrian path. She noticed that:

...walkers are very different, very much different in their leisure mode than cyclists because of our pace... Cause it’s a very different way of experiencing the world, walking, than “zoom”, than having the landscape zoom by like that...Georgia O’Keefe, New York Radiator Building, Fifth Avenue...Mabel Dodge...those kind of connections come through walking, just cause I think better when I’m walking...

From my own perspective regarding pace and walking in Paris and New York, I wrote this in my May 2008 personal notes, “rushing, pushing, moving too fast disorients me, scrambles my brain, limits my creative thinking abilities. I get blurry, my eyes don’t focus, my anxiety rises.”

### **Theme 3: Walking Subsumes Meaningful Experiences**

Ideas about the lived experience of walking, when interpreted in thought from the context of previous experiences in the world, produce a sense of meaning. When placed in the context of memory after walking, judgments about the lived experience were value-laden, and spoken of with pleasure. Walking in this sense matters to the participants in this research project. The participants found self-referential meaningfulness in city walking apart from its embodied act. They imbued walking with possibility. They described city walking as a way to claim oneself, time, and space, and as adventure, exploration, and discovery. From this two subthemes emerged: 1) appropriation, and 2) wonderment.

#### **Sub-Theme 3a: Appropriation**

By this I mean taking something for one's own use, claiming ownership based on one's own authority, and doing what one values. There was a sense of determination. The participants talked of walking in contexts of taking back or claiming one's time, space, city, past, and self. This was also expressed as a choice to take back their time in slow walking in reaction to the fear of it becoming only something hygienic or controlled as a measure of health.

Mary talked about taking back time with friends like in the old days when families spent time together strolling:

I'm a leisure walker, there are lots of leisure walkers. But, it, I think there are people back in touch with experiences they had as children. You know some friends and I who came to visit me, who're my age, our age, said you know we used to go walking after dinner, or on Sunday all the time, and so, so this was really wonderful for people to get in touch with, you know, let's go out for a stroll...

She values leisure walking in the context of linking the past to the present.

James finds meaning in taking back the city for himself by walking in anonymous places no one would notice as a way to go against the grain, to claim places by walking to them, in them, and through them. He shared the following example:

West from Times Square and a little South you, there's this neighborhood that doesn't really have a name... And it's pretty bleak um it's also right by the convention center which is, which is an aside, but they put the Convention Center in the worst place. People like come from out of town and go to the Convention Center and then they leave and they're like nowhere... But anyway, something about being in that neighborhood, and being very, very near Times Square where everybody's going and, at least tourists go there and some New Yorkers go there at least to go to movies, um but to be just off center from the hub of activity where all of the, all of these paths are being walked over and over and over again by the same people for the same reasons and to be just, just a few blocks away from that, and to be walking these paths that nobody walks for any reason except they, they need to be there.. I don't know, there was something kind of thrilling about that ... for me. And, something about being off the beaten path and being like rebellious or or or going away from societies standards or something like that resonated with me.

Mary also wants to hold onto the easy-goingness of leisure walking. She fears that when an authority instructs people as to what kind of walking they need to do to be healthy or lose weight, it becomes a prescription. It will lose something vital to everyday lived experience. She voiced hope and concern:

I would hope, some people have written me that they've been stimulated to walking and getting off the couch, because I do walk about walking from here to there and the there is so fantastic, that the only way to do it though is to get up and go and walk out the door... we've turned walking into we've turned all athl, anything that might have athletic benefits into an industry. So that people think they need to walk 10,000 steps, with athletic shoes, and go like that... and swinging arms and that it's divorced from your real normal life.

She expressed value in keeping walking a simple part of daily life.

Michael expressed similar views related to holding onto walking as a valued part of daily life for mere mortals. He spoke with apprehension and concern about walking losing the intangible connection to beauty and explained:

So on a physiological level it engages a lot of muscles. But it's something that non-athletic types like myself can do without feeling like we're taking castor oil. It's very mental in a way. It allows you, if you are cerebral or locked in your head, to continue to do so in an understood manner at the same time as to take in the consolations of the real world... I worry about too as walking becomes associated with health and well being and it's losing some of its romantic and aesthetic qualities. So this is a way for people who are not particularly athletic, who you might say are prisoners of their mind to make peace with themselves. An intellectual activity.

I have noted similar sentiments. A walker is only human, and walking is personally lived by real people. I wrote down this thought in my June 2008 personal notes:

Dignity precedes any argument that intends to solve the problem of unhealthy lifestyle (i.e. obesity, poor diet, lack of exercise). By prescribing a walking regimen (exercise recommendations), it risks reducing the issue to one of a 'pound of flesh' rather than that of ontological value, one's meaning in being, lacking dignity. Dignity-the quality of being worthy of esteem or respect.

In the act of walking, the participants lay claim to themselves, the city, and the opportunity for a new experience.

### **Sub-Theme 3b: Wonderment**

By this I mean pleasurable, affective arousal generated by unforeseen experiences.

Previously unnoticed elements of the cityscape generate rapt attention in moments of surprise and discovery. One becomes wide-eyed and feels unexpected anticipation and delight.

Michael spoke of city walking as full of ephemeral engagement with the crowd and landscape such that it possesses an intersubjective, meaningful personal identity for him. He interprets this engagement:

...in NY there is this um surprising random serendipitous profusion of incident one person after another you never know what's coming at you one store after another you could look at street level traffic, you could look at a second story event you could look at the tops of buildings you could look in the distance and so this became my process. I to go inside this locked corridor of my mind and to be brought out of it, out of that claustrophobia by the sensory world.

Mary identifies her walking self as something of an explorer. She recognizes the sense of accomplishment aided by her willingness to conquer the fear of seeing new places or interacting with people during walks that she would not ordinarily have met in walks. She dislikes following the orders of a GPS. She chooses to be an adventurous walker and embraces a willingness to get lost. Mary told a story of the memory of a favorite walk along the East River to Roosevelt Island that captured that sense of exploration and discovery in taking her from labored despair to rapt delight:

...of all the walks since the beginning of the year, um, this is most memorable. I was walking up in the East 50's I guess, and I was on the East River, and I was walking along the East River esplanade walkway, it was the worst walk I've ever been on in my life. It was next to the FDR highway, and there were really, it was, it was a dysutopia (dystopia). It was a, cars were pouring, and there was smog, I was breathing smog, and yet there's this tiny little walkway next to the East River. And it smelled bad, and there were fumes, and it was, and I thought, "this is the biggest waste of time I've ever had in my life." And then so I get off wherever it was it was at 57th street, and I walked over to 2nd Avenue, and I saw the trolley to Roosevelt Island (you know about?). And I thought, "God, maybe I can redeem this awful experience." So I jump, I'd never been to Roosevelt Island, I got on the trolley, and I got over to Roosevelt Island, and then I went to, there's a little visitor center next to the trolley stop on the side, I said, "what do you do here?" And the woman said, "most people go see the ruins of the smallpox hospital." I said, "I want to see that." And so, I walked then down just south of there a mile of where the visitor's center, along the East River on the other side from where I had this horrible experience. And there's this oasis of sanity. And then I got to the end, and there is this wild, green park that is like something out of Wuthering Heights. And there is emerging in these trees are these gothic ruins of a smallpox hospital that used to be there. And so, it is like this painting, a pastoral painting. And then beyond that is all this wild, this point of greenery, that, um, where you come to that point. And I walked, and I was the only one there. And I turned around, and there's the great Manhattan skyline, over on the, it was over to my West. And then I saw this beautiful, unmarked wild part of Manhattan. I turn around and there's these Gothic ruins. And I think, wow. You know I have, I have, I really have made a journey from the bad urban experience to finding buried treasure, these unique wonders.

She writes and tells stories of walks like this in the hope that the words will reach readers who want that sense of taking an adventurous journey and become inspired enough to get off the couch and walk to discovery.

Lee also interpreted walking and writing about walking as avenues for discovery and amazement. During the interview while talking about what writing about walking can do, I saw/heard him discover/uncover experienced moments of layered remembrance that meaningfully connected elements of the telling in new ways. He realized that this sense of discovery connects with those who read articles about walking just as the walk itself reveals connections to the city on the ground. He walked me through a narrative of writing for a newspaper article, connecting it to people who promote walking, then linking both to the meaningfulness of connecting to the city:

So, writing about walking, reading this article about walking, in which I was a part of the article, sort of made me realize there this connection to something that's sort of larger and that this is something that has been going on and is sort of celebrated if you will in literature. So, I think that articles about walking are very valuable because they will maybe encourage other people to do it or simply to recognize something that they already do. I think that there's a lot of people out there that walk for leisure. I'm now, suddenly, I don't know why this is surfacing now, but I recall participating in several walks, there's a group here in NYC, this was before I [my wife], it must have been, there's a group called Shore Walkers here in the city... I don't know how I'm remembering all of this, but he runs this organization and they have this series of walks where you just kind of show up and join in and someone's there to provide sort of a commentary and a tour pointing out milestones along the way, but they just do these walks and I recall going on two maybe three of them when I first got to NY. And, I'm sure this organization is still around, but it was, they do this Great Saunter every year in which they circumnavigate all of Manhattan along it's shore line... So, I'm sure, if he's still around which he probably is because he'll live forever because he's walking all the time... his group "Shore Walkers," it's, they're just these kind of folks who are promoting walking as this activity... There's just so much to see because, you know, the Waterfront is a part of our city that's sort of ever being sort of rediscovered and that kind of thing just like in every city, in that it used to be the place where 'we'll put the highway over there on the waterfront cause nobody goes there.' But now at this point Waterfront property is just an amazing commodity even in this market. And it used to be difficult to walk around the Waterfront in various sections of the city, but what's happening, the city as it's developed more and more they've actually built this beautiful park along the west-side right along the water and other places where they are trying to foster public access along the waterfront, because nothing goes together like walking or cycling or jogging and being along a beautiful place like a river or what have you. So, I think these things are, it's funny, it's as if, sometimes things are advanced and you don't even know it, like you don't realize that by providing public access or making a link between-there's a path here and a path here and you link them up, all of a sudden the real estate values in that part of Manhattan started to



inch up because who wouldn't want to live near this really terrific park where you can now bike or jog or walk from Battery Park all the way to 59<sup>th</sup> street and there it links up with a whole 'nother park and then there's Riverside Park, you can go all the way to the George Washington Bridge because of this, and people, and people are doing it.

He surprised himself in a very present way in the moment of narrating his story to me. He realized the discovery of a newfound awareness of the revelatory possibilities of the walking and the writing and the telling.

There were several unexpected findings worthy of note. One unexpected finding related to the impression that built pedestrian areas being forwarded by the mayor and built along Broadway were detrimental to street life. Michael stated that, "pedestrian zones are a bad idea". The problem here is one of paternalistic power. Michael goes on to say the message he gets is that, "we allow you to walk around, it's not taken seriously, it's not real life, it's a mausoleum." The idea of artificial separation, of creating distance between people and the environment, takes the life out of being on the street. The second unexpected finding was the absence of any suggestion that gender mattered in one's choice to participate in the public city space. This is contradictory to prevailing wisdom that tells women that there is risk involved when in public spaces as is mentioned in the constraints literature. When asked directly about gender differences in city walking, no one noticed differences one way or the other. A third unexpected finding was an overall absence of comments about constraints to walking, which runs counter to much of the extant literature in walking reviewed in Chapter 2.

### **The Research Questions**

Keeping in mind the first research question-what can literature 'do' in the quest for knowledge of the lived experience of leisure-I read a palpable literary influence in the participant's talk on walking. There was notable confluence between ideas on walking in Balzac's axioms and their responses. This speaks to the timelessness of literary perspectives on

being in the world generally, and on walking in the city particularly. Each person talked about carrying around influential ideas from writers and the way specific authors influenced the way they viewed the world. Literature writes an internal narrative on an aesthetic reading of lived experience.

When considering the second research question-how do meaning (mind) and presence (body) manifest in the individual experience of walking-I read a palpable feeling of connection of self realized in the walk. Connecting to the history of the city dominated throughout the interview transcript data. By placing foot on pavement, the participants felt that a walker experiences a slowing of time that foregrounds a valued past against the intrusive presence of the urban milieu in a way that makes the familiar strange. Moments of sensory essences noticed by the participants while walking took the forms of embodied rhythm, stimulated senses, and mindful pace. These were conduits for gathering tangible connections to the past, to people, to place, and to time. The participant's multilayered awareness and 'fresh eyes' generated feelings of nostalgia, gratitude, protectiveness, and loss and was a medium for wonderment.

Bearing in mind the third research question-what is the lived experience of movement of the body in walking and perception of space and time-I read a palpable interpretation of meaningfulness in the walk perceived by the participants. Meaningfulness came from appropriating their time, memories, and independence in the midst of pressure to do otherwise. These meanings reinforced pride in their beliefs that walking set them apart from the stresses of the high volume intrusiveness of city living. The participants wanted to do walking in a relaxed manner, not according to a prescriptive agenda. Surprise, discovery, delight, amazement, and adventure were commonly expressed interpretations of walks.

## **Summary**

This study explored the lived experience of urban walking as shared in interviews with self-identified urban walkers. All of the participants took on a conversational tone with me in answering the interview questions. The exchange of ideas generated responses leading to themes relevant to the research questions. Responses ultimately represent the seemingly simple human act of walking as a complex leisure activity. The participants voiced common themes related to: walking as a writable/readable aesthetic act; walking as embodied, sensed time; walking as making connections; and walking as knowing self and others. These are not to be taken lightly. Above all, all of the participants consider their walking as an important element of daily living. They find respite, release, awareness, fulfillment, and beauty in it. Walking is a meaningful act.

The lived experience of city walking for the participants in this research project is inscribed onto the landscape, embodied in form, and meaningfully interpreted. Following this chapter are discussions of theoretical contributions, practical implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

New York...The walker within the city...there is not the monotony of trees, all green, but the infinite variety of the city's strata of architecture; the old sloping roofs with a touch of Dutch about them; the flaking brownstone, to be observed as a geologist looks at a canyon; the efflorescent brickwork of the 1890's and often the majesty of towers like peaks or the gaunt beauty of stepped skyscrapers against the blue sky...there is color as he may desire; if he choose he may walk in yellow streets or in red...The sun's rising arc is lifted above him as the year grows and he tastes the seasons through the changing riverward vista of cross-streets; and after dark, housetops and street lamps only make the blue of the night sky deeper (Levick, 1924, p. 192)

The findings of this phenomenological study show that the lived experience of urban walking expressed by the participants is meaningful by reason of perceived, dynamic perambulation through contexts of narrated, embodied, and thoughtful life-worlds. In this study, I intended to bring to the fore co-produced descriptive representations of the lived experience of walking as viewed historically from an 1833 essay by Balzac and the grounded perspectives of New York City walkers in order to broaden understandings attributed to the lived experience of leisure. I placed myself in and understood the essay and participant's narratives through a Schutzian phenomenological methodological lens as well as the concepts of 'presence' and 'meaning' forwarded by the literary theory of Gumbrecht.

Analyzing the interview transcripts through those lenses using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, I identified three super-ordinate themes, each with two subthemes, describing the phenomenon of city walking as lived experience. The dominant aspects associated with walking by the participants were: noticing history and beauty, slowing down to experience the world in new ways, and making tangible connections. The perceptions on walking articulated by the participants in the interviews and analyzed as findings in Chapter 4 speak to me as lived experience in the context of classical essences of leisure.

This chapter discusses the theoretical implications of this research study in the context of the findings related to each of the three research questions. These include discussions of: 1) lived experience; 2) walking as living language; 3) urban walking as lived leisure; 4) walking as knowing; presence and meaning, and; 5) the functions of leisure: representation, identity, control, and resistance. Following that, I offer a discussion of practical implications of this study for understanding the lived experience of leisure through walking. The chapter concludes with limitations, suggestions for future research, and a summary.

### **Lived Experience**

When approaching this research from a hermeneutic-phenomenological philosophy, understanding everyday lived experience is the focus of study. When choosing Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as the qualitative method of inquiry and analysis, the focus is on the particular experience of particular people and the sense they make of the phenomenon of interest (J. A. Smith et al., 2009a). In this project, the phenomenon of interest was urban walking as experienced by people who choose to walk and write about walking. Their expression of understanding of the lived experience of walking was spoken, taking the form of language. So what can be said about ‘lived experience’?

Taking guidance from the tenets of the phenomenological and psychological foundations of IPA furthered by Smith (2009a), “experience can be understood via an examination of the meanings which people impress upon it” (p. 34). At a fundamental level, lived experience is either that which takes place as one consciously moves through the spatial flow of informal occurrences (pre-reflective) or as that which one reflects back on when mental processes attempt to interpret or make meaning of what was just moved through. To be more specific, perspectives on lived experience focus on temporal, embodied, and cognitive aspects (Bergson, 1921;

Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Rickman, 1976; Sartre, 1985; Schutz, 1967a). Following are brief explanations of these views as related to phenomenological understanding of lived experience.

When contextualizing lived experience as pre-reflective, flow, consciousness, and temporality come into play. According to Wilhelm Dilthey (1976), a 20<sup>th</sup> Century German psychologist/philosopher, humans participate in everyday ‘experience’ that “presents itself as a unit in the flow of time because it has a unitary meaning, is the smallest unit which can be called an experience” (p.210). In this case, evidence of this kind of lived experience manifests itself as awareness of small seemingly insignificant things such as the smell of toast when walking by a restaurant or the feel of ones soles on pavement. In one aspect, Alfred Schutz (1967a), from a socio-phenomenological standpoint, considers the temporal nature of experience as “awareness of the actual ongoing or passage of my life...*within*<sup>22</sup> the meaning-endowing acts themselves” (p. 36). He adopts this concept of duration or time-consciousness from Henri Bergson’s (1921) philosophical concept of *durée*, the idea that something must occur or will be occurring before another action in the future; there is temporal progress, an indivisible mobility, through the time-space of action and project toward action. Lived experience flows in time in awareness in living from one moment to the next.

Contextual perspectives on lived experience that garner awareness in the mind, by way of one’s shifting attention toward understanding, interpretation, or materiality, focuses on issues of embodiment, spatiality, and cognition (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Natanson, 1998; Sartre, 1985; Schutz, 1967a). Merleau-Ponty (1962), in *Phenomenology of Perception*, takes the position that the essence of lived experience is a physical, spatial perception. His notion that one’s body and mind form a substantive, unified body-in-the-world establishes the primary essence of lived

<sup>22</sup> Emphasis his

experience (J. A. Smith et al., 2009a). Jean Paul Sartre (1985) also considers lived experience as participatory consciousness that comes in conjunction with existence in the world. Sartre “turns our attention toward things that matter to us – the people, objects, places and relationships which constitute our lived experience” (J. A. Smith et al., 2009a). There is always recognition of an element of freedom in existentialism with Sartre. Alfred Schutz (1967a) weighs in here as well. In addition to considering consciousness in duration as a temporal structure of lived experience mentioned above, he again draws from Bergson (1921) and identifies reflection on the experience as a kind of spatialized time in remembrance. He states, “it is by virtue of retention that the multiplicity of the running-off of duration is constituted...the identity of the object and objective time itself is constituted in recollection (reproduction)” (p. 49). Lived experience is known in reflection directed toward what occurred in experiential time.

Leisure studies and leisure sciences contextualize ‘lived experience’ as located in a particular time and place subsuming ‘lived’ as a foregone conclusion. In that sense, saying ‘lived experience’ when referring to the participants in research or activities takes on doxic understanding without explanation. There is certainly value to understanding leisure as a human endeavor with particular goals. Although operating within bounded categories and limiting approaches, research in that sense has generated “impressive advancement of thought with distillation and generalizability as goals of leisure research” (Parry & Johnson, 2007). I suggest this way of understanding lived experience in the leisure disciplines chooses a focus that aligns more closely with the reflective, meaning-making perspectives of what constitutes ‘lived’ outlined above. ‘Experience’ alone is the identifying term most often associated with leisure participation or activity.

Experience as such is represented as goal oriented and understood as time, as activity, as a path to wellbeing, as freedom, as constrained, and as satisfaction. To get at ideas relating to the pre-reflective ‘lived’ element of leisure, I turn to remembrance of Pieper’s philosophical treatment of leisure that incorporates being and mind in human existence as the purview of leisure. In that sense, narrative expressions as told by people who participate in leisure may better amalgamate pre-reflective and reflective attitudes of lived experience in leisure and generate depth of understanding of the experience. Lived experience then, is at once temporal and located in the continuous oscillation of being in the moment of the world and making sense in the mind of that moment.

There is another consideration in understanding one’s awareness of lived experience. That is leisure as represented in writing and text. My efforts in this research acknowledge my experience as a walker in co-production with the participants in understanding the lived experience of urban walking. There is a multi-layered hermeneutic in play in the co-production of the text that communicates the shared understandings. In that sense, I acknowledge the limitations of my own representation of the lived experiences of the participants and know that neither I nor the participants can capture the essence of something actually lived (Parry & Johnson, 2007). I recognize the importance of the participant narrative expressions of their own lived experience and the way I write about it. “[W]e usually think about writing as a mode of ‘telling’ about the social world...writing is also a way of ‘knowing’ – a method of discovery and analysis” (Richardson, 2000b, p. 516).

Talk, story, and writing contribute localized knowing pertaining to the human perspective of lived experience by the participants in leisure. Expressed perceptions by the urban walkers in this research, co-produced and written as personal, located language in narrative in the context of



Creative Analytic Practice (CAP), “tell stories about their own lived experiences, relating the personal to the cultural...narratives of the Self” (Richardson, 2000b, p. 931). Literature on walking and my writing about the narrated perceptions of the urban walkers in this research align with the approach of CAP to “embrace[s] the textual or narrative turn within qualitative studies of leisure” (C. Fleming & Fullagar, 2007, p. 238) as a way of creating knowledge about lived experience.

## **Walking as Living Language**

### **Learning from Language**

The participants in this research clearly supported the idea that literature, and by default language, connects reading and historical knowledge to meaning and feelings that open them up to receive aesthetic experiences while walking. As human beings, we long to establish connections. Reading literature was an aesthetic experience for the participant walkers that opened them up to connect to experiences in the landscape. To the walkers in this research, literature was lived as they walked and narrated in their understandings of urban walking.

Articulating the importance of the narrative to knowing themselves in the lived experience of walking in everyday life places it within phenomenology. The participant’s literary narratives “allows us to know something without claiming to know everything...partial, local, historical knowledge is still knowing” (Richardson, 2000b, p. 928). These elements reflect the operating perspective of lived experience as forwarded by Schutz and discussed in Chapter 2. Thus lived experience in a pure sense, and described on page 22 is, “simply living in the flow of duration”. As the flow of experience moves forward in walking, it can only acquire meaningfulness in “the reflective glance” (Schutz, 1967a, p. 71). The walkers in this research narrate their experiences of walking reflecting back making it tangible in language.

In the book *The Problem of Social Reality* (Schutz, 1967b), phenomenological sociologist Alfred Schutz speaks to the origin of knowledge in language:

The typifying medium for *par excellence* by which socially derived knowledge is transmitted is the vocabulary and the syntax of everyday language. The vernacular of everyday life is primarily a language of named things and events...Knowledge is socially distributed (p. 14).

All of the participants mentioned feeling a connection to specific authors or historic figures on the street. They ‘carried around’ thoughts about or memories while walking of authors they had read and felt that they actually encountered them as they went through the neighborhoods of New York. James mentioned the proximity he felt to John Adams, and John Randall, the surveyor who authored the 1811 grid of Manhattan. Mary felt the presence of many authors who had lived in New York City-Georgia O’Keefe, Mabel Dodge Luhan, Holly Go Lightly, Truman Capote, Edna St Vincent Milay-and ‘spoke’ to them as she walked.

Michael expressed a deep connection to literature and its lessons. He spoke of the compositional walks of Apollinaire, Gertrude Stein, and the films of Michelangelo Antonioni within the first two minutes of the interview; the influence for him was one of recognizing walking and composing, creating. Lee talked about the plaque on the Washington Irving house, and Edith Wharton’s birthplace in the Flatiron Building being turned into a Starbucks. Lee linked the past to present in the city through his walking to Jane Jacobs, Washington Irving, and Oscar Wilde. Lived experience in this case is a walking narration, is recognized as language; literature is felt and made real in connecting to the city.

### **Lived Literary Aesthetics**

Although my research was not about the Balzac essay per se, I was questioning the relevance of past ideas on walking to the present context of walking and came upon an

untranslated essay on walking which I discuss in Chapter 2. The participants reflected similar perspectives as those expressed by Balzac in his observations on walking in the 1800's.

The backstory here is the resonance I felt in reading Rojek (2006) and his perspective on history which values broadening the scope of studying leisure. According to Rojek (2006), “

Comparative and historical analysis helps us realize that our own conditions of life do not apply everywhere and that what we take to be unique about our own time can only be confirmed by examining the past and conditions of life elsewhere.” (p. 460)

The Balzac essay provides that comparative-historical context for this research.

I consider the Balzac essay a genuine window into the walking culture of the early 1800's based on the reviews of his literature. Balzac's writings generate respect as mirrors into the social fabric of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Paris (Robb, 1994). In *Théorie de la Démarche*, he describes truths about walking gleaned from his own experiential observations and the potential of walking to foreground meaning. Robb commented on the veracity and depth of his novels,

...historians and sociologists have used Balzac's work as an unorganized encyclopedia...Walter Benjamin saw Balzac as the first hero of modern life, the Mohican of the city or the private detective...laying the ironic foundations of a Modernist aesthetic. (p. 423)

Balzac's mission was to capture in language a representation of his time in *La Comédie Humaine*<sup>23</sup>. “The beginning and ending of Balzac's work is a quest for general truths” (Farrant, 2002, p. 19). Farrant (2002) goes on to say, “The first aim of his creation is to interpret the world; its means of doing so, description, and classification.” (p.19). I found that he had something to say about city walking in *Théorie de la Démarche* (1833) that rang true for the participants in this research study, namely walking as historic narration and aesthetic experience.

<sup>23</sup> *The Human Comedy*, a collection of novels and stories published over many years in the early 1800's (Balzac, 1981)

In analyzing the interview transcripts, I sensed instances of historic reverberation when participants spoke of ideas about walking similar to those espoused in Balzac's axioms, whether they had read the axioms or not. The ideas surrounding aesthetic beauty-form and rhythm-in walking, were consistent with those found in the axioms. Mary felt the pulsing rhythm of the city and said, "you can see that everyone has a different pace and rhythm...I became real fascinated by that rhythm." Lee saw beauty in the architectural landscape noticing as he walked by a school, "it's gorgeous, it's like a gilded age bank."

The participants realized a tangible history between the past and the present, and in a sense became part of the text of the telling. Michael stated:

...You know, Coleson Whitehead<sup>24</sup> said that, "being a New Yorker is looking at something and realizing that something else used to be there"...You know you are a New Yorker when you have that sense of nostalgia and loss...you see sometimes wonderful buildings...it's like standing in front of a painting...So, certainly walking has an aesthetic dimension.

James senses a romance with the city in following the grid designed by John Randall between 1818 and 1820,

...and him walking these straight lines across this desolate landscape that became you know Seventh Avenue through the Upper West Side and the Upper East Side and Harlem...he's the first one that walks all these lines that become these neighborhoods and that, that just the romance of that just totally struck me.

They realized in the moment that it had an impact on their walking. In talking about the city as traversed in their walks, there was evidence of reflexive engagement with reading literature or history that influenced awareness of a living, historical city. James longed for and sought out connections to Randall; he did this in his walks.

Their kind of walking was consistent with the reflexive walking type I discussed in Chapter 2. Reflexive walking is embodied, vulnerable, and receptive. I consider this similar to

<sup>24</sup> A New York City novelist

the walking of the *flâneur*, who is like “a kaleidoscope gifted with consciousness” (Baudelaire, 1964, p. 10). The slower, rhythmic pace was an aesthetic experience combining the literary meanings, rhythmic movement, and sensory responses of a wakeful openness. James states, “there’s a lot of strolling around looking in shops, but you know like the *flâneur*.” And Mary expressed a sense of pride in a walking identity with characteristics of the *flâneur*, “someone who is a bit there to be seen too. As well as to look out, to observe.”

When walking, there is a palpable sensitivity to aesthetic essences noticed by the participants that include layering literary influences onto experience. “Our emotional response to artworks matters” (Waters, 2005, pp. 9-10). A literary scholar and executive editor for the humanities of Harvard University Press, Waters emphasizes the importance of the aesthetic literary connection forwarded by Gumbrecht and writes, “for Gumbrecht we can never detach ideas about a literary work from the work itself. We cannot discard a poem. The key is to think about how we experience it.” (p.10) I shall return to Gumbrecht later in this chapter.

The experiences described by the walkers in this project are something other than instrumental or functional. They walk for aesthetic beauty. They walk because they love to walk. They walk because it is meaningful to their daily existence. The slower pace, the ability to observe, and the feelings of fulfillment take on characteristics that suggest contemplation and a sense of calm, of leisure. Even though they are moving through the environment, there is stillness and receptivity. This is not walking born of activity or productivity. This is, “the disposition of receptive understanding, of contemplative beholding, and immersion-in the real” (Pieper, 1998, p. 31). This receptiveness, as well as the connection to literature, leads me to consider this reflexive, receptive walking in the context of classical leisure, the leisure of Josef Pieper.

## **Urban Walking as Lived Leisure**

### **Constraints and Contemplation**

The talk of walking shared by the participants in this research project reflected very little of the research literature on walking reviewed in Chapter 2. Walking has been positioned as an accessible, efficacious stepping-stone to disease mitigation and contributor to overall health. It has been largely publicly promoted using totalizing (e.g., 10,000 steps a day to health!), medicalized recommendations with limited successful participation and researched primarily from positions of failure to participate due to personal or environmental constraints.

Compounding this is the lack of consideration for informal, leisure walking as equally valued; it only counts when it becomes a goal oriented, instrumental activity. Health and wellness practitioners when viewing walking as an intervention in their efforts to engage people to participate in walking programs, adhere to the quantified strategies promoted by the medical, health, and leisure studies professionals as absolute. The narratives of the lived experience of walking articulated by the participants of this research, add to these perspectives.

As I stated previously, general research in the extant literature maintains focus on functionalist or utilitarian walking, as well as constraints to walking. Those are insufficient to characterize the walking described by the participants in this research project. Their walking reproduces a perspective of leisure that,

...simply became the problem of skillful time-filling and the correspondingly easy drift into thinking of leisure as some kind of diversionary, largely escapist, essentially segmented (disparate, anecdotal) technique or method. (Hultsman & Harper, 1993, p. 53)

The participants' walking in this research is a kind of walking born of desire and is lived aesthetically and receptive to seeing beauty and landscape, feeling rhythm and mood.

The participants talked of walking regularly and long, operating from curiosity and pleasure. They did not talk about their own walking as: a social activity, as a walking program participant, as vigorous exercise in the context of active living, as difficult, as park users, wilderness, or trail walkers, as a source of fear due to crime, limited by access or weather, or needing special equipment. They did not talk about their walking in terms of: bothersome sweating or fatigue, disease prevention, weight loss, counting steps taken, or health. Little was mentioned regarding concerns with the built environment-poor lighting, poor sidewalks, traffic hazards-as impediments to walking. Constraints were not a focus of the conversations we had about city walking.

They did share common views with me about walking as: embodied awareness, hopeful, aesthetic, meaningful, rhythmic, as ever changing, and reflexive. They did present a way of walking that represents a “view that leisure is most essentially a position of relaxation, of faithful openness to immediate reality and ease of movement and thinking” (Kleiber, 2000, p. 84). Leo was aware of his feet touching the ground and of his sensory experience in connection to the city in his walking,

...I was doing something that was part of something bigger...the act of walking was part of the experience, because it was from my own two feet...a lot of it is olfactory, it's the scents...smells like toast when you walk by.

The pace of leisurely walking allowed for connections to develop between temporal foregrounding of environment with tangible experience. Experiencing a slower pace creates space for contentment, serenity, creativity, and relaxation and is an important part of life often associated with leisure (Kleiber, 2000).

The slow pace allows for openness for Mary who comments about receptivity and leisure. She said...”walkers are very different, very much different in their leisure mode...connections

come through walking, just cause I think better when I'm walking." This created a relaxed sense of temporality that led to reception of sensory and emotional feelings for her.

Considering that the participants in this research consider walking as a path to meaningfulness and receptivity places it within the classical leisure literature of Josef Pieper. This is an important departure from the limited, instrumental research topics that focus on intense, productive, serious, goal oriented, or constrained leisure reviewed in Chapter 2. This also supports a viewpoint consistent with the goals of creative analytic practice offered by Parry (2007) to:

...reflect experiences in ways that represent their personal and social meanings rather than simplifying and reducing to generalize. These meanings are not researcher-derived in the form of explanations, but rather stem from the social spaces and cultural contexts of those people being researched. Clearly, research that contextualizes leisure and encompasses the complexity with which it is lived is needed. (p.120)

I appreciate the personal, narrated, and lived experiences found in walking and recognize the complexity of personal connections to the city expressed by the participants of this research. Theirs are full of wonder, and joy, and discovery.

In his book, *Leisure the Basis of Culture*, Pieper includes wonder, joy, and hope as markers of leisure. Of wonder and joy he tells us:

...for the one who wonders...the one who experiences the astonishment...is nevertheless the sense that the world is a deeper, wider, more mysterious thing than appeared to the day-to-day understanding (p. 105)...The one who wonders is one who sets out on a journey...is defined...as the desire for knowledge...the source of joy and the source of wonder are the same thing. (p. 107)

Mary's experience in walking through the city landscape of New York reflects that wonder. She talks about discovering a breathtaking landscape in the middle of the city, "and I walked...I turned around and there's the great Manhattan skyline...I saw this beautiful, unmarked part of Manhattan...these unique wonders."



James was affected by the ability to see familiar things anew and spoke of amazement when we talked about his connections to the city while walking. He commented, “it has something to do with keeping me engaged with, I don’t know, the amazingness of life, or something like that...you’re just seeing the same familiar things with new eyes.”

Wonder and surprise come in moments, in ethereal passages of body in time with the things of the world. They are unexpected and a cherished element of what makes us aware that what we are experiencing is ‘lived’.

The conversational, co-produced understandings of leisure walking presented in this research are complex and cannot be measured, distilled or standardized to “aggregate responses with others and reach generalizable conclusions” (Parry & Johnson, 2007, p. 120). The perspectives offered by this research expand current viewpoints about walking that relate to mindfulness, presence, and meaning. As the participants of this research remembered their walks they inscribed emotions, wonder, and leisure onto the landscape.

The knowledge shared with me in interviews by this group of New York City walkers offers an opportunity to move in a new direction in considering what can be known about the lived experience of leisure in walking. Lee, James, Mary, Michael, and Leo made the connections to the things of the world and to aesthetic experience in walking. They began this connection through the awareness gleaned from the language of literature and took it to the sidewalk. “Language, under certain (varied) conditions can make the past tangibly present” (Gumbrecht, 2006, p. 323).

My ultimate hope for this research is to return to concepts once profound and valued to Leisure Studies related to connections of the body to the environment and influenced by changed perceptions of time in the slower pace of leisure walking. This starts with acknowledging

language as a catalyst for initiating tangible connections of body to mind. Therefore I move this discussion into the realms of literary theory in order to reclaim the lived experience found in leisure. The walkers are doing things that occur in everyday life, yet opening themselves up to possibilities. These walkers are just real people, doing everyday ordinary things, in the place where they live, and finding moments of meaning in walking.

### **Walking as Knowing: Presence and Meaning**

All of the participants narrated a very strong felt effect on their perceptions of and attachment to the historic city either directly or indirectly. These connections formed through literature or language of the sidewalk shaped their impressions of themselves in connection to the past, as well as to an aesthetic presence. Participants in this research project discovered something about themselves in literature as it made contact with the concrete, city landscape. The language of literature touched them as they touched the ground.

That personal, tangible, dynamic sense of connection to the histories of people, places, and “things of the world” (Gumbrecht, 2004a, pp. xiii-xiv) made real through language situates this narrated act within the literature of Gumbrecht (2004, 2006), specifically “presence culture” (p. 80) and “meaning culture” (p. 80) as it applies to understanding lived experience and knowledge in the humanities.

In *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (2004), the literary theorist Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht forwards ideas about lived experience as a dynamic oscillation between actually being in the world and thinking about being in the world, or presence and meaning respectively. He refers to “presence” as, “a spatial relationship to the world and its objects” (Gumbrecht, 2004a, p. xiii). He considers “meaning” as self-evident to the reader and needing no definition (Gumbrecht, 2004a, p. xiv). He goes on to say, “If we attribute a meaning to a thing

that is present, that is, if we form an idea of what this thing may be in relation to us, we seem to attenuate, inevitably, the impact that this thing can have on our bodies and our senses”

(Gumbrecht, 2004a).

Gumbrecht criticizes the humanities for elevating knowledge production to the purview of “meaning”, the absolutism of mind-based interpretations, and relegating an embodied connection to the world, or “presence”, to that which must be bracketed out (Gumbrecht, 2004a).

He hopes to challenge the dominance of interpretation in the academic world, and makes:

...a pledge against the systematic bracketing of presence, and against the uncontested centrality of interpretation, in the academic disciplines...what this book ultimately argues for is a relation to the things of the world that could oscillate between presence effects and meaning effects. (Gumbrecht, 2004a, p. xv)

The descriptions of tangible connections and perceived meanings as found in the lived experience of walking from the participants in the interviews suggests that walking as a form of being in the world inherently oscillates between presence effects and meaning effects.

Gumbrecht (2004), differentiates presence culture from meaning culture in the following ways:

The mind vs. the body...The mind is the dominant human self-reference in a *meaning culture*...the body is dominating in a *presence culture*...Subjectivity vs. cosmology...”Subjectivity” within *meaning cultures*-eccentric in relation to the world...In *presence cultures*, humans consider their bodies to be part of a cosmology-part of the world...Legitimate knowledge...*Meaning culture*: if it has been produced by a subject in an act of world-interpretation...*Presence culture*: legitimate knowledge is revealed knowledge. Revelation and unconcealment. Not necessarily conceptual, can be substantial...Humans in the world...*Meaning culture*: transforming the world is the main vocation of the human. *Presence culture*: where humans want to relate to the surrounding cosmology by inscribing (their bodies) themselves into the rhythms of the cosmology. No will to alter these rhythms. (Gumbrecht, 2004b, pp. 3-4)

My emphasis here, as this relates to the limitations of understanding lived experience from the previously problematized perspectives in Chapter 1 of a doxic privileging of post-positivist research methodologies in the construction of knowledge in Leisure Studies, is on knowledge

production in the field and the potential of language in understanding and influencing lived experience.

Gumbrecht (2004) clarifies lived experience in this way,

When I use the concepts of *Erleben* or “lived experience”...I mean them in the strict sense of the phenomenological tradition, namely, as a being focused upon, as a thematizing of, certain objects of lived experience (p.100)...I am speaking of “lived experience”, of (*erleben*) are characterized by an oscillation between presence effects and meaning effects...(p.107)

As it applies here, “the ‘presence’ of things, including things of the past, can be rendered in language” (Gumbrecht, 2006, p. 317). Humans long for ‘presence’ and tangibility of lived experience. Gumbrecht (2006) goes on to clarify this concept:

...language can be the medium through which the separation of humans and the (physical) things of their environment may be overcome. The hope of achieving presence in language is no less a reconciliation of humans with their world, including...the things and events of their past. (p. 317)

Walking embodies an inherent space for the oscillation between presence effects and meaning effects to take place—a space for the play between body and mind—for engagement with the things of the world that we can then attribute meaning to as they get the focus of our attention. I suggest that temporal foregrounding makes the space in-between that allows for us to see familiar things in our world anew. It is in these moments of awareness and movement that we know lived experience in leisure.

### **The Functions of Leisure: representation, identity, control, and resistance**

The notion of lived experience is nebulous and negotiated at best. Yet, understanding it in multiple ways is of increasing interest to those who study leisure (Dupuis, 1999; J. Hemingway, 1995; Parry & Johnson, 2007; Stewart & Floyd, 2004). Leisure as an inherently lived experience is valued. Taking an Action approach to leisure that uses historical and comparative analysis in addition to face-to-face methods is relevant to understanding the lived experience of urban

walking within functions of leisure (Rojek, 2005). Functions as understood here, maintain “a commitment to understanding functions as *processes* (p. 85). In this research, narrative communication of lived experiential awareness contributes to knowledge creation within functions of leisure.

Narrative ‘telling’ about the experience of urban walking by the participants requires further analysis as it relates to personal choice and action. “[I]t is not enough to focus upon the narrative data supplied by social actors. These data, and the experience that gives rise to them, must be situated in relation to location and context” (Rojek, 2005, p. 62). Location relates to structures of influence and context relates to historical positioning (p. 13). In the interest of elucidating implications for this research, I offer a conversation on the primary functions of urban walking in this research as lived experience. Following Rojek (2005), these are: representation, identity, control, and resistance (p.83). Representation as regards walking in this research considers the promotion of voluntary walking. Identity refers to boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. Control refers to regulation of conduct and lifestyle. Resistance concerns actor’s response against control and power.

Representations of urban walking operate from viewpoints of the pedestrian as disadvantaged on one hand and privileged on the other. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, as motorized transport became available and desirable gaining recognition as evidence of success, walking became banal; a person walked only if they could not afford a car. These views continue to be promoted in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century as international initiatives aimed toward influencing increased pedestrian safety in urban areas continue to target issues that relegate walking to the purview of the underprivileged (OECD, 2012). Dialectically, representations of walking locate it in the context of privilege as well. For instance, New Urbanism, architecturally designed communities

promoting walking, become affordable only to the upper middle class. Walking promoted as valuable only if it meets daily requirements of 10,000 steps per day carries the assumption that anyone has free time to walk for hours or can walk on a treadmill at the gym if they want to; this takes on an air of privilege. The participants in this research represent that privileged group of walkers. They have access to knowledge that facilitated recognition of aesthetic form in their walking. They have the time and resources to ‘choose’ walking and to aestheticize this ordinary, bodily action. I question here whether these seemingly opposing viewpoints are incommensurable when promoting walking as an accessible activity.

I acknowledge my representation of walking as a narrated, knowledge producing, lived experience and accessible to everyone in the everyday. I acknowledge the influence of power emanating from the medical and health promotion enterprises advocating prescriptive and totalizing recommendations. In opposition to that commoditized view of walking, I further viewpoints on walking that value it wherever it is located, in the home, out the front door, in small increments of time. I also recognize that discussions of the influence of gender, ethnicity, and class representations influenced the walkers in this research and were for the most part, left out of the discussion. These connections would benefit from further research.

Identity in this research, as it relates to walking by the participants, ascribes a kind of status to them. This is also related and influenced by representations of walking named above, and plays out in what it says to those around them. The leisure practices in this research, “manifest ties of belonging and markers of difference” (Rojek, 2005, p. 89). Walking here takes place in New York City, primarily in Manhattan, suggesting images of Central Park, skyscrapers, loft apartments, and Wall Street. The walkers express concerns about the commodification of walking necessitating participation in the commercial athletic enterprise that exclude anyone

who cannot afford the newest pair of \$150.00 walking shoes. Conversely, the participants also express hopes of inclusion by virtue of their published and internet-based writings on walking, websites, and blogs.

Television, political edict, medical recommendations, and school-based interventions attempt to exert control over the choice to become physically active. The walkers in this research are influenced by literature and mass communication. They are always already situated in a Westernized, well-read, pedestrian culture. In this sense, influences for them come from having access to higher education, literary pursuits, and access to information about walking in the city. These internalized messages lead them to value their walking self and the knowledge produced by awareness. Mass media and health initiatives publicize expectations that push the notion that everyone can meet the minimum guidelines for walking. If an overweight person has insufficient time to walk the expected amount of time or steps, or is unable to afford walking shoes or to join a gym, or is embarrassed to exercise in front of other people, stigmatizing messages further attempt to control a voluntary choice through coercion.

Language can motivate or alienate when discussing issues related to obesity (Puhl, Peterson, & Luedicke, 2013). Language is a physical dimension that manifests in thought and talk; it connects in a material way to our environment. Language makes things evident. It matters in the way we connect with people. Puhl, et al, studied the expressions health providers used with patients and found that:

Health providers express negative attitudes toward overweight and obese patients that can be conveyed through weight-related language...the terms ‘weight’, ‘unhealthy weight’ and ‘overweight’ were rated most motivating to lose weight. The terms ‘morbidly obese’, ‘fat’, and ‘obese’ were rated as the most undesirable, stigmatizing and blaming language used by health providers...participants reported they would avoid future medical appointments...seek a new doctor if they felt stigmatized.” (p. 612)

Individual choice is subjected to external political and medical decree that establish representational forms of leisure and identity.

Resistance plays a part in choosing walking as represented by the participants. Each of them in some way lays claim to an aspect of the body, history, and the city. Walking here becomes a “cultural practice that allows for ‘resistance’...as an everyday occurrence” (Rojek, 2005, p. 105). Choosing a slower pace in walking that facilitates increased awareness leading to wonderment lays claim to time and resists the normative coercion of a fast-paced car culture. Valuing the history of place in New York City and perambulating the sidewalks of unpopular or obscure neighborhoods lays claim to place. Giving leave to the direction your feet want to take you and being willing walk for hours and miles in the open lays claim to the body and one’s unfettered connection to the tangible essences of the city in everyday life. Rather than utilizing walking for getting from point A to point B, the walkers in this research hold onto their personal openness and resist conformity. The articulated narratives of the urban walkers in this study suggest hope for knowledge production in everyday practices of lived experience. Taking an Action approach to walking in this research as understood from functions of leisure, one can know at an individual level how balancing choice with structures of influence affect identity, leisure values as one becomes aware of connections to people and place, and how meaning is situated in everyday life.

### **Limitations of the study**

Qualitative inquiry, hermeneutic phenomenological methodology specifically, involves iterative and therefore changing knowledge. Any interpretation necessarily changes from one time to the next, as understanding is situated in a particular time and place, value laden from the social, political, historical, and personal experiences of the researchers and participants (Creswell



et al., 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Schwandt, 2000). Walking itself is mobile, dynamic, and palimpsestic; there is no absolute knowledge inherent to the experience of walking. The participants filter knowledge through their own reading of lived experiences.

I am reluctant to forward knowledge claims based on my own point of view. My research, operating from the methodological standpoint of phenomenological inquiry, was always subject to my mental model and lived interpretation. My beliefs, experiences of walking and viewpoints provided a personal context from which I viewed the narrative accounts of the participants. I acknowledge bringing my own passion for walking to the interview meetings and to review of the interview transcripts. I always and everywhere stood in my phenomenological mental model and acknowledge that lens influenced what I heard and noticed. All levels of understanding were co-produced by perambulating through a layered hermeneutic of give and take between the literature, the participants, and me.

I acknowledge perceived limitations from those who conduct research from a quantitative, post-positivist perspective, and I am excited about the possibilities of giving voice to city walkers. One limitation may be the number of participants. However, there is value in illuminating individual perspectives on the lived experience of city walking as experienced on the ground by people who walk for its own sake. I cannot construct generalizable results that would produce, “law-like statements, or the establishment of functional relationships:” (van Manen, 1990, p. 22). However, I am able to explore the participants’ lived experiences from a phenomenological viewpoint and bring multiple individual realities to weigh in on understanding the lived experience of walking in New York City this study. Lived leisure experience, perceived in the present moment of living it, is valuable to the people who walk and of value to

understanding lived experience in the walk for the field of Leisure Studies in my present moment.

## **Research Implications**

That what people talk about carries weight as meaningful lived experience in Leisure Studies research. Moving away from using research to hit people over the head with recommendations that humiliate, see only the flesh. This research holds the potential for enlightening recreation practitioners and health professionals to the prospect that slowing down, noticing connections, and finding wonder shines the light of hopefulness on the every day act of leisurely walking for ordinary people. When we medicalize or concretize the benefits of walking, we back ourselves into a corner and look only for that evidence with results to measure.

“Certainly the doctors are correct in saying that lack of leisure makes one ill. But at the same time, it is impossible to be truly at leisure merely for the sake of health” (Pieper, 1998, p. 58).

Most people already know about the healthy foods they should eat and are aware that physical activity contributes to health and wellness. This is a kind of common knowledge that is so familiar that it does not stand out against the background of daily living. The constant barrage of messages about healthy eating and exercise don’t stick. “The things that *stick*-the things, that is, that make their way into the *mémoire involuntaire*-are the things that do *not* connect to how we have designed the interior of our minds” (Runia, 2006, p. 312). In other words, offering positive and hopeful viewpoints on leisurely walking that stands out from the background of typical recommendations for time or steps may create ripples in the pool of common knowledge regarding integrating walking into daily busy lives. Temporal foregrounding experienced in walking holds promise in its ability to change a person’s perspective, to see the familiar as strange, and the path to ‘chance mindfulness’.

Mindfulness has gained prominence as a clinical intervention in disciplines of psychology, medicine, and health (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). According to Kabat-Zinn (2003):

An operational working definition of mindfulness is: the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment...It is an inherent human capacity. (pp. 145-146)

Mindfulness practice has shown promise in changing impulsive eating habits (Papies, Barsalou, & Custers, 2012). I depart from their of mindfulness that reduces reacting to external stimuli that causes overeating by virtue of, “allowing one to separate the processing of a stimulus from one’s reaction to it” (Papies et al., 2012, p. 297), in other words to divorce one’s thoughts from the need to act on them. Rather, I consider contemplative leisure and presence experienced in the slow time of walking to create space for awareness of the mind-body *connection*, not separation, in ephemera.

Mindfulness is more than focusing awareness on an act because, “there’s separation between awareness and the object of awareness” (Beck, 1993, p. 88). Walking in this research is a practice in the sense choosing slow walking, but not in deliberate, goal-oriented practice as would be assigned as an intervention. Walking as voiced by the participants here, shows the lived experiential awareness as: reflexive, aesthetic articulation; transient, sensorial presence; and self-referential, epiphanic meaning. In turn, those lead to noticing awareness, tangible connections, and infinite possibilities, respectively. This walking awareness draws similarity to foundational aspects of mindfulness practice, but these are just moments in passing while walking, not practice per se.

I consider the experience of the walkers in this research as ‘chance mindfulness’, not as a formal practice, but as something we already have access to in walking just by slowing down to

access contemplative leisure. Following Charlotte Joko Beck, an American Zen teacher, the practice of awareness is available to everyone such that:

There's a practice of maintaining awareness; in that sense, Zen practice exists. But so long as we're alive, there's the question of awareness. We can't avoid it. In that sense, there's no way to avoid practice, or even to do it. It's just being alive...real "Zen practice" is just being here right now and not adding anything to this. (p. 50)

The possibilities for chance mindfulness in walking focus on the idea that, "all we must do is constantly to create a little shift from the spinning world we've got in our heads to right-here-now" (Beck, 1989, p. 11). This is the way of walking illuminated in this research.

Another implication of this research lies in adding a human and aesthetic perspective to discourses on psychological, social, and environmental factors in promotion of physical activity as part of the active living agenda. Feature articles or white papers on the human factors of knowledge production from awareness in walking may help to bridge the gap between opposing representations of urban walking as relegated to the poor or as the purview of the privileged. Perhaps this gives us a place to start in figuring out where the 'disconnect' occurs in affecting the sedentary lifestyle and obesity epidemic. Mindfulness may mediate constraints. Changing the focus of research on walking from external elements to internal elements of meaning could provide further understanding of the reasons choose to exercise. A shift to valuing 'non-productive' walking, walking done for the joy and pleasure it brings, is valuable to reduce obesity; even moments count. Conduct research with people on the ground. Pleasure, touching the places we walk, using language as a means to connect people to each other and a tangible world.

## **Summary**

From this research, I learned that walking in New York City is meaningful when there is time enough to make connections to the history of the city, to the people, to the self, and to

wonder. Lived experience is in every day motion, is transient, and is only known in passing moments. It is not dependent on spectacular events; it only requires small epiphanies. The lived experience found in leisure walking has no answers, but gives us the creative space to hear the questions. It is not something we have; it is only something we know, noticed in moments of history, or the senses, or movement. Lived experience occurs in the space in-between presence and meaning. It requires temporal foregrounding, a shift to slow time like that in leisure walking, for if we go too fast through life there is little chance to see ourselves against the background of our existence. Lived experience exists in language articulated; words touch. Lived experience is embodied in the 'walk' experienced by the participants in this research project and is that of Balzac and Baudelaire, the reflexive walk of the *flâneur*.

Researchers in the Leisure Studies discipline have lost the 'art' of the walk-the beauty, the desire, the emotion, the body. Let's remember the pleasure of leisure, the appreciation of beauty in body and motion, of light, of sound, and of touch, give credence to individual narrated perceptions and meanings in lived experience. Temporal foregrounding gives us the perspective to just see the beauty. Lived experience is born of slow time, two feet, and sky above...of leisure.

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## APPENDIX A: TWELVE AXIOMS TRANSLATION

**Twelve Axioms** (Balzac, 1981; originally published 1833).

### My translation from French text to English

- I. The walk is the physiognomy of the body. [*La démarche est la physionomie du corps* (p.280)]
- II. The glance, the voice, the breath, and the walk are identical. [*Le regard, la voix, la respiration, la demarche sont identiques* (p.280)]
- III. Tranquility is in stillness of the body. [*Le repos est le silence du corps* (p.283)]
- IV. Slow movement is of itself sublime. [*Le mouvement lent est essentiellement majestueux* (p. 283)]
- V. Any jerked movement belies an imperfection or unwholesome education. [*Tout mouvement saccadé trahit un vice, ou une mauvaise education* (p. 284)]
- VI. Beauty requires rounded form. [*La grâce veut des formes rondes* (p.284)]
- VII. All in us takes part in movement; but none must dominate any one part. [*Tout en nous participe du mouvement, mais il ne doit prédominer nulle part* (p. 285)]
- VIII. Human movement resolves into quite distinct times; if you blend them, you come to mechanical rigidity. [*Le mouvement humain se décompose en temps bien distincts ; si vous les confondez, vous arrivez à la roideur de la mécanique* (p. 287)]
- IX. While walking, women can show everything, but leave nothing to see. [*En marchant, les femmes peuvent tout montrer, mais ne rien laisser voir* (p. 288)]
- X. There are movements of a dress that are worth the Monthyon Prize. [*Il y a des mouvements de jupe qui valent un prix Monthyon* (p. 289)]



- XI. When the body is in motion, the face must remain still. [*Quand le corps est en mouvement, le visage doit être immobile* (p. 290)]
- XII. All excessive movement is utterly portentous. [*Tout mouvement exorbitant est une prodigalité sublime* (p. 293)]

## APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Initial questions:

*How long have you been a walker? What is your occupation/career?*

*Describe the kind of walking that you do. When, where, with whom, how long, pace, etc.*

In addition, Balzac's 12 axioms<sup>25</sup> provide a framework for question construction and choices.

[Axiom I: The walk is the physiognomy<sup>26</sup> of the body.]

[Axiom V: Any jerky movement betrays one's vices or a bad education.]

*What do you know about a person who calls him/herself a 'walker'?*

*What is most important to you about walking?*

[Axiom II: The glance, the voice, breathing, the walk are identical; but, as such it was not given to man to be able to attend to these four various and simultaneous expressions of its thinking at the same time, seek that which speaks truth; you will know the entire man.]

*What happens when you walk?*

*What are the positives and negatives of walking?*

[Axiom III: Repose is the stillness of the body.]

[Axiom IV: Slow movement is magnificent above all.]

*What is most important to you about walking?*

*How does walking fit into your daily life?*

<sup>25</sup> From my translation of *Théorie de la Démarche*, by Honoré de Balzac

<sup>26</sup> One's features or outward appearance interpreted as indicator's of character or temperament

[Axiom VI: Grace desires round forms.]

[Axiom VII: Everything in us takes part in movement, but no single part should prevail over the others.]

[Axiom VIII: Human movement is composed of distinct timings; if you confuse them, you become mechanically stiff.]

*What kind of walking do you do?*

*How is this different from other kinds of 'walks'?*

[Axiom XI: When the body is moving, the face must remain motionless.]

[Axiom XII: Any exorbitant movement is a sublime prodigality.]

*What defines walking?*

*What makes a person a 'walker'?*

[Axiom XI: In walking, women can show everything, without leaving anything to be seen.]

[Axiom X: There are movements of the skirt worth the price of Monthyon.]

*Does gender play a part in walking?*

*If so, how?*

## **APPENDIX C: AIDE MÉMOIRE**

Knowledge of the walker and pedestrian culture perceived from reading axioms

Interface of time perception with leisure walking

The bodily experience of time and meaning, descriptions

Historical impact on present, evidence of

Does 'leisure' have anything to do with walking

## **APPENDIX D: TELEPHONE SCRIPT**

### **Telephone Script**

P = Potential Participant; I = Interviewer

I - May I please speak to [name of potential participant]?

P - Hello, [name of potential participant] speaking. How may I help you?

I - My name is [insert researcher name] and I am a Doctoral student in the Recreation, Sport and Tourism Department at the University of Illinois. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Laura Payne on walking. As part of my dissertation research, I am conducting interviews with residents of New York City who consider themselves to be walkers to discover their perspectives on pedestrian culture.

I would like to set up a time to speak with you in person about your perspectives on what it means to you to walk and your ideas about the ways walking crosses over into all aspects of daily life. Is this a convenient time to give you further information about the interviews?

P - No, could you call back later (agree on a more convenient time to call person back).

OR

P - Yes, could you provide me with some more information regarding the interviews you will be conducting?

I - Background Information:

- I will be undertaking interviews starting in May.
- The interview would last about one hour, and would be arranged for a time convenient to your schedule.
- Involvement in this interview is entirely voluntary and there are no known or anticipated risks to participation in this study.
- The questions are quite general (How do you describe the kind of walking you do?).
- You may decline to answer any of the interview questions you do not wish to answer and may terminate the interview at any time.
- With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis.
- All information you provide will be considered confidential.
- The data collected will be kept in a secure location and disposed of in X years time.
- If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please feel free to contact Dr. Laura Payne at 217-244-7038.
- I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Institutional Review Board. However, the final decision about participation is yours. Should you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board at 217-333-2670 (collect calls accepted if you identify yourself as a research participant) or via email at [irb@uiuc.edu](mailto:irb@uiuc.edu).

- After all of the data have been analyzed, you will receive an executive summary of the research results.

With your permission, I would like to mail/fax you an information letter which has all of these details along with contact names and numbers on it to help assist you in making a decision about your participation in this study.

P - No thank you.

OR

P - Sure (get contact information from potential participant i.e., mailing address/fax number).

I - Thank you very much for your time. May I call you in 2 or 3 days to see if you are interested in being interviewed? Once again, if you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me. My cell phone number is: 217-621-1639.

P - Good-bye.

I - Good-bye.

## APPENDIX E: INTRODUCTORY LETTER

### Introductory letter

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Date:

Dear (*insert participant's name*):

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I am conducting as part of my Doctoral degree in the **Department of Recreation, Sport and Tourism at the University of Illinois** under the supervision of Associate Professor *Laura Payne*. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part.

Over the years, informal groups or independent activities have played a significant role in leisure services delivery, and research in the past decade suggests that individuals are increasingly participating at that level. State and local park districts are becoming less able to provide the same level of service as it has in the past due to the impact of changes in the social, economic, political, and technological environments. Therefore, there is even more pressure on voluntary leisure services to pick up the shortfall in getting people involved in leisure participation. The purpose of this study, therefore, is *to understand the voluntary act of walking as it takes place as part of urban pedestrian culture*.

This study will focus on the personally meaningful, enjoyable, and valued experiences of walkers and their change to the quality of life in and through leisure. Participation in this study is



voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately *one hour* in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences by advising the researcher. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study. However, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained for *three years* in a locked office. Only researchers associated with this project will have access. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study other than those associated with normal, daily life.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at 217-621-1639 or by email at *reible@uiuc.edu*. You can also contact my supervisor, *Dr. Laura Payne* at 217-244-7038 or email *lpayne@uiuc.edu*.

I assure you that this study, reviewed by personnel of the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board, has received ethics clearance. However, the final decision about participation is yours. If you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact the Institutional Review Board at 217-333-2670 (collect calls accepted if you identify yourself as a research participant) or via email at *irb@uiuc.edu*. You will be provided a copy of the consent form for future reference.

I hope that the results of my study will be of benefit to recreation organizations not directly involved in the study, as well as to the broader research community.

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Yours Sincerely,

Student Investigator

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## **APPENDIX F: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

### **CONSENT FORM**

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Dr. Laura Payne and Heidi Reible of the Department of Recreation, Sport and Tourism at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I am aware that the procedures to be followed include face-to-face interviews (maximum of two) at a mutually agreed upon location and follow-up telephone communication about the interview(s).

I am aware that there are neither costs incurred by me nor compensation provided in choosing to participate in the study.

I am aware that there are no foreseeable risks or discomforts associated with participation in this study other than those associated with the ordinary risks of daily life. I am aware that the University of Illinois does not provide medical or hospitalization insurance coverage for participants in this research study nor will the University of Illinois provide compensation for any injury sustained as a result of participation in this research study, except as required by law.

I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses and that these recordings are only for transcription purposes,

not for dissemination.

I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in the thesis and/or publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous.

I was informed that I might withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. The decision to participate, decline, or withdraw from participation will have no effect on my status at or future relations with the University of Illinois.

This project has been reviewed by and received ethics clearance through the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board. I was informed that if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in this study, I may contact the Institutional Review Board at 217-333-2670 (collect calls accepted if you identify yourself as a research participant) or via email at [irb@uiuc.edu](mailto:irb@uiuc.edu).

With full knowledge of all foregoing,

I have read and understand the above consent form and voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

☐ YES   ☐ NO

I agree to have my interview audio recorded.

☐ YES   ☐ NO

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

☐ YES ☐ NO

I have received a copy of the consent form.

☐ YES ☐ NO

I am 18 years of age or older.

☐ YES ☐ NO

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Please print)

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Please print)

Witness Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW-LS100014-JAMES

[I know you walked every street in Manhattan, and that's pretty amazing in and of itself, to maintain that kind of focus. But, what really motivated you in the beginning to...]

To do it?

[To do that? I know it was sort of accidental...]

Yeah...

[you did it for awhile and then...]

right

[decided to finish.]

yeah

[You walked a lot then.]

Yeah...um..I mean I guess it was sort of a, there are, I mean there are a lot of reasons for it, but, coming from New Mexico, um, I used to walk a lot there, but, and actually didn't get a drivers license until late and never drove very much. I still don't drive very much, so. So I've lived in places like New York and Boston, um, I think that's, that's sort of a big reason why. It's because these are, they're both very walkable cities and public transportation and all the rest makes it feasible not to have a car. Um but I think uh yeah that I'm always sort of a tourist always kind of interested in my physical environment and um you know a lot of people they sort of go to a city and you see the greatest hits and you see you know a few sites and then you're kind of done and it's like "now I've seen New York" and now I'm just gonna start walking back and forth or driving back and forth in between my job and home and the grocery store and wherever else and that's gonna become my little loop in the city and I'm not gonna, people aren't interested in seeing anything other than that in the city. But I'm...I just always keep going. I guess when I get to a new place, and I'm very interested in what the buildings look like, what the streets look like, what the people look like in a place, and why the buildings were built in the first place, and what they're used for now, and, um what a park looks like. All these different things, um, um I'm always curious. I guess that curiosity never, never stops.

[Um hum]

So I was just wandering all over Manhattan um sort of to satisfy that curiosity and I also had this romance with Manhattan you know that all these neighborhoods seem so romantic to me to to to every you know every neighborhood was famous you know and I wanted to see what the famous people did in this famous neighborhood

[Yeah]

Um so yeah I was just doing that and it just sort of made sense, you know, as I was marking off on my map streets that I've walked Manhattan is pretty unique. It's a cohesive unit, it's pretty small, it's pretty walkable. You can walk from end to end in one day and um I just got into filling in these black lines on my map. And it just made sense to just fill in the whole map with these black lines. It just um, yeah...

[That's so cool. Yeah, I've looked at the your website a number of times and uh]

Mm hum

[It's uh, what I find fascinating about walking a lot of time is are the kinds of details that you]

Mm

[Point out, ]

Right

[the things that aren't in the tour books but aren't even really]

yeah

[noticeable unless you have an eye for something that isn't typically looked at]

right right

[Which leads me to another question, um when you think about just the activity you know doing the walking um, how...how do you describe or think about the act itself?]

Yeah, well, for a lot of the walk once I got into sort of deep rhythm of the walk where I was doing it very regularly, um there became a rhythm of going out and setting out every day to walk. And then there's the rhythm of the walking itself I think? Um, I don't know, somehow it became very familiar and very um ... like a comfortable state of being to be in somehow and somehow in...I don't know what to say about that.

[I think you are saying it's more than just moving one foot in front of the other]

Yeah

[for you]

Well it's definitely like a whole body mind kind of experience being out on the streets. Um and the rhythm of walking engages you in a certain way. I think then definitely more that driving or seeing something on TV to be walking through an environment...

[Mm hum]

Yeah and...also, I mean to walk down a street as opposed to driving down a street you're definitely engaged with the people in a way that you're not um otherwise. You're, as a pedestrian in New York...I mean to be a New Yorker is to be a pedestrian in a certain way.

[That's an interesting point]

Um because yeah and that's that also makes New York a comfortable place to walk in than a lot of other places. I know in Albuquerque I used to walk a lot and also Albuquerque is flat with a lot of straight lines. So people see you coming from a long ways away and you're walking and you're all alone. You're the only pedestrian, and everybody's like, "here comes this guy" and they probably have thought of something you know smart to say to you by the time you get up to them.

[Uh huh. So you kind of feel like a target?]

You're a target, definitely. And in New York, everybody's walking on the street all the time. So it's a very normal activity to be participating in um yeah. There's also, I mean there's other things. There are so many people in New York City that all you have to do is cross the street and you're a million miles away and nobody's going to you know. If you see some tough people over here just cross over there and...

[That's cool yeah, yeah. Just to follow up on you know, you say "everybody in New York's a pedestrian", it is a fact according to the Federal Highway um Department that there are over nine million people who walk to work every day]

Mmm

[In New York.]

In New York

[The most in any major city. That' like 5.6%]

Yeah yeah

[How would you explain that just about New York City?]

It's just proximity I mean I walk to work. Uh huh, yeah, I live over in Harlem, um, just down from Morningside Heights over here and um there would be no other practical way for me to get to work. It just wouldn't make sense for me to do anything except walk. I I if I couldn't walk, if I had some physical problems or something, I don't know what I'd do. Um how I'd get here, cause the bus doesn't come exactly, you know it just doesn't make sense to do anything besides that. I wonder is a lot of those people who walk to work...New York's transportation system,



especially Manhattan, is very North South oriented, and I wonder if a lot of those people like me live East or West, if they're walking across town?

[Yeah, I wonder...]

Yeah, yeah. There are cross-town busses...but um, if you get on one of those busses you're stuck in traffic. I mean it's just ...

[I know, exactly, I've ridden some of the busses here..]

you might as well be walking...um yeah. So that's, yeah, and it's, you know, everything is so close to each other. People are piled up in tall buildings, crammed in next to each other. So, there's just close proximity of everything. Um , which also has a lot to do with my wanting to walk in this city. Although I think I'd probably walk no matter where I was if I was I'd go through hikes in the country which is a very different experience, but um I am interested in history. And, when I first moved to Boston, I went on the Freedom Trail, it's this thing that you know, Paul Revere and then John Adams and all the you know the Boston Tea Party and one after the other. And it just, it just amazed me you know like in in Albuquerque you see where Billy the Kid did something, and then you drive 150 miles and...

[both laughing]

...then here's where something else happened...and that proximity just blew my mind. And in New York there's so many famous things and amazing historical things and just every day historical things have happened here in such close proximity to each other that any block, any walk down any pretty much random block if you do your homework on it there's gonna be something...

[uh huh]

...that happened there of historical significance or if not that just it's interesting one after the other, after the other. So yeah that definitely engages me.

[Um hum. So are you working on your book?]

Yeah, I'm working on a book about Broadway.

[Ok]

Yeah, uh, it's pretty much, I mean it's gotta be one of the, one of the greatest streets in America, in American history. And, um it's also extremely walkable, you can start on one end and get to the other in one day. And a lot of people have actually emailed me on my site, probably about 5 or 6 people have emailed me on my site, and they've come up independently with this idea of walking Broadway in a day. And so if that's just people emailing me on my site, statistically there must be a lot of people doing that...

[Yeah]

...in any given year. And it is a great walk, you just, you start at the Northern tip um in the morning particularly on a long summer day and it's not even that late in the evening by the time you get to the end, and then it's good to go North South and then you have the Statue of Liberty at the end...

[yeah ]

...and you know...

[yes]

...a big reward...and wooh!...you know, I walked Broadway. So, um , so anyway, so yeah, I'm working on a book about Broadway and all of its different history and the different roads that were put together over time to make up Broadway and things like that. Yeah, yeah.

[Any sense of like who these people are like, who would, what kind of a person would...]

Do something like that?

[...do something like that?]

P laughing I mean, ...I don't know, I, I definitely get a sense of college educated, um just the kind of people who visit my site at all, tend to be, I think, college educated. Um and who tend to think of walking as anything other than getting from point A to point B. I, I think, I mean I don't...yeah.

[If they're not thinking of getting from point A to point B, then what, what are they thinking about?]

Just to see and just to walk like it's a...I don't know. I think of it as like a walking tour, I think of it as the same kinds of thing that would uh uh inspire you to sign up for a walking tour of London streets or something, you know, it's just sort of to see except it's not necessarily for the "Jack the Ripper Tour" it's just to see Broadway or the Upper West Side or just whatever it is you know. I don't know, does that answer your question?

[Yeah, oh yeah, yeah, yeah. Um, you know I'm just...]

Yeah, yeah, yeah

[...just going on what you're...]

Just talking.

[Yeah. Uh, I'm wondering though again just to go back to even yourself or thinking about people like you who do these kinds of long walks, ...]

Yeah

[...it takes a lot of time...]

Yeah

[...to walk...]

Right, right

[...the way you do. So, I, I wonder about like values, like personal values or...]

Yeah

[...or ways that you are in the world...]

Right

[...that maybe factor into...]

Yeah

[...doing that.]

Yeah,

[What do you think?]

Yeah.

[Different kind of values say than the person who, I mean, I meet a lot of people, I walk everywhere I am too, even in my little town in Urbana, you know...]

Yeah

[...it's not a city by any means, it's a 100,000 people...]

Yeah, yeah, yeah

[...yeah, but I walk. I walk the 3 miles to campus, ...]

Yeah

[...and people look at me like I'm insane. ]

Yeah, I know.

[I mean, it's like well why?]

I wonder if there's something to that? I know that, I thought about,...I always think about this one neighborhood that I walk through, I mean I walk through every neighborhood, but ...it's over if you go um uh uh West from Times Square and a little South you, there's this neighborhood that doesn't really have a name, and it's kind of interesting that it doesn't have a name, cause every neighborhood ...

[Yeah]

...you know, has a name, I guess it has some greater name, I guess it's part of, it's, what is it? It's near Chelsea, I guess, or something. But it's a little nameless, and it's sort of bleak and industrial and it's where all the taxicabs get repaired. It's where all the taxicab repair shops are. So not the kind of destination that people go to see. And it's pretty bleak um it's also right by the convention center which is, which is an aside, but they put the Convention Center in the worst place. People like come from out of town and go to the Convention Center and then they leave and they're like nowhere. They're nowhere, they're in the most nowhere place in Manhattan ...

[I laughing]

... they could possibly be. Which is not good for, for advertising us. But anyway, something about being in that neighborhood, and being very, very near Times Square where everybody's going and, at least tourists go there and some New Yorkers go there at least to go to movies, um but to be just off center from the hub of activity where all of the, all of these paths are being walked over and over and over again by the same people for the same reasons and to be just, just a few blocks away from that, and to be walking these paths that nobody walks for any reason except they, they need to be there,. I don't know, there was something kind of thrilling about that ...

[Uh huh]

... for me. And, something about being off the beaten path and being like rebellious or or or going away from societies standards or something like that resonated with me.

[Ok]

Um, when I was doing that. And a lot, I mean the whole walk in general kind of felt that way. I read later, I didn't read about this when I was doing the walk, but later I read about this um this idea of psychgeography. Have you ever heard of that?

[I have heard of that, uh huh. I have.]

Um there's a lot to it but what works for me with psychogeography is just the idea of doing an intentional walk that isn't going to the store, or going to work, um, in order to re-look at your environment and to think about the environment in a different way. I think other people have different meanings different things that they do with that term, but that's what it means for me.

[Ok, uh huh]

Um., so, so like I said, I didn't think, I didn't, I wasn't familiar with that term when I was doing the walk, but it resonated with me for, for with why I did the walk.

[Um hum]

It was about re-looking at my environment and trying to see things with, with fresh eyes and trying to see things not in the same way you always see them, and so to force yourself to walk down some random street that you would never walk down before sort of forces you to into this re-looking. It's like "ok, here I am, I'm on this street" you know "what's here, what is there to look at, why is this street here, why is it important", um...

[What matters about that to you though? Because there are just as many people who don't care.]

Yeah.

[What matters?]

It has something to do with keeping me engaged with, I don't know, the amazingness of life, or something like that. Um um cause you can get sort of inured to that or numb to what life has to offer. And I always think of um another analogy that I think of is a is a fresh snowfall. You've been in, you've been on your street a million times and then you open the door and there's a fresh snowfall and it's like magic fairy land. But it's not, it's just the same street, you're just seeing the same familiar things with new eyes because it looks different. It's the same but different you know.

[Um hum]

So, that's another analogy that I like.

[Um hum. ]

Um ...

[Can you think of anything else why that matters to you to feel to, to seek that out?]

Yeah. Um ...I don't know.

[Ok]

Yeah that's a good question.

[Keep that in the back of your mind...]

Yeah...I mean I've been asked variations on that a lot. A lot of the people who have asked me, like newspaper reporters and stuff have asked me, I don't think they were really interested [chuckles] as to why I was doing it. I don't know, I don't know, like over the years I've been asked that a bunch of times um but usually in a situation where there's people just writing a newspaper report...

[Um hum. Right, I've read some the articles you've been interviewed for.]

Um, I don't know. Um...go ahead.

[So, I'm also when I think about walking or even taking long walks, uh, certainly it takes a lot more time...]

Yeah

[...as I've mentioned. And, I often wonder how, how can we choose to do that when things around us are so hectic...]

Right, right

[...and there's a lot of push to to multi-task...]

Yeah

[...and to keep up with the Joneses...]

Right

[...and be successful which includes doing as many things as you can...]

Right, right

[...I think, and keeping up. So, how does, how do you reconcile that?]

Yeah, Well, most of the, most of the New York walk I did um when I didn't, I wasn't in school and I didn't have a girlfriend.

[both laughing]

So, yeah. So you definitely have a lot more time on your hands when you're doing something like that. Um and I think it yeah it takes all kind of time you have to sort of you know give an importance to this act that's not going to make you any money or do you know any give you any

reward other than some personal psychological reward. You have to give that a huge amount of importance in your life...

[Um hum]

...and a huge amount of time in your life. Um but I don't know I guess just I've always kind of been that way. Like...

[Its an interesting, I think, almost irreconcilable dialectic. I mean, you live in one of the busiest cities in the world...]

Right, right

[...you do a lot of things obviously in your life. You're in school, you're working...]

Right

[...and I guess you have a girlfriend...]

Yeah

[...and you walk...]

Yeah

[...But the walking, is just, it's such a different ...]

I know

[... way to be in the environment.]

Yeah, well actually, cause I'm, I'm working on this other walking project right now and uh I just don't have the time to devote to it that I wish I did. Um...

[What's changed then?]

Girlfriend and school.

[Just that, just those life things.]

Yeah, yeah. I just have to like sneak it in at at times. Um...

[What would happen if you prioritized it?]

Girlfriend wouldn't like that...

[Uh huh]

...and grades would be affected.

[both laughing]

So, [continued laughing] adverse effects in other parts of my life. I do need to, I mean I'm actually going to be giving a talk about it in about a month.

[Yeah, you told me about it, in November.]

So I've been forced to prioritize. Um uh and I've been just sort of putting my thoughts together on this...

[Uhn huh]

...on this project and actually doing spending as much time doing that as actually doing the project and just doing the walking. I wish I could just spend a lot more just leisurely days. I miss those days definitely just walking all day. Waking up early on a Saturday walking pretty much most of the day.

[Um hum]

Yeah, I definitely miss that. Um yeah um...

[Who do you, ok, let, then let me go, so you're working on another project. Tell me a little bit about this, the new one. Is it the Broadway project or another one?]

No. It's a different thing. Um it's there's it...I don't...I'll explain. It may not make total sense...

[Ok]

...but I started, I got really interested um as I was finishing the walk, I told you I'm into history and stuff, and uh, I got really interested in this guy uh John Randall, who was a surveyor in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and he laid out the grid. The Manhattan, the Manhattan street grid.

[Ok]

And, um I did a lot of research, I read all of his journals, they're in the New York Historic Society, and got very interested in this guy and did some work on it for, for research projects for school. And um so his grid...a lot of people talked about it in a lot of different ways but um, anyway it went from First to 155<sup>th</sup> Street and it wasn't totally realized. The biggest exemption would be Central Park.

[Um hum]



Central Park is probably 1850 so the grid some of which had been actually been laid through Central Park...

[Right]

...is obliterated and then there's other things like Morningside Park, and other parks, and then there's a bunch of housing projects in the 60's that go in and obliterate the grid and all this so these big, huge chunks are taken out of the grid...

[Yeah]

...in all these different places. What, one of the things that fascinated me about John Randall is the idea of this sort of empty wilderness landscape, mostly wilderness, with these little clusters of settlements in upper Manhattan, and him walking these straight lines across this desolate landscape that became you know Seventh Avenue through the Upper West Side and the Upper East Side and Harlem. Like he's the first one that walks all these lines that become these neighborhoods and that, that just the romance of that just um totally struck me. Anyway, so because these now, these portions of the grid have been obliterated by these parks and these housing projects, so I started walking his grid through Central Park, and through Morningside Park, and through housing projects, and it's like rediscovering these unwalked streets through Manhattan...

[Yeah]

...that I'm slowly starting to walk. And I'm, with a friend of mine we're documenting it and videotaping as I walk through, walk through...

[Great]

...yeah, so, that's the project I'm working on now, but I haven't gotten as far along with it as I would've liked. But whatever.

[Uh hum. Uh hum. That sounds pretty exciting.]

Yeah. Um but it's the same idea just you know I'm not getting anything out of this or whatever, it's just sort of this this re-re, it's this fresh sort of way to for me to re-look. I've been through Morningside Park and Central Park a million times, but it's something about walking those straight lines through there, it's this new way of experiencing the the same the familiar. Again, it's that same idea.

[Yeah]

So...

[I can see your excitement about it.]

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[You know, it's definitely exciting.]

I'm definitely enjoying it.

[Do they have the maps and everything, his maps, or do they have...]

Uh huh

[...yeah. I'm going to head over there when we get done here. I'm going to go over to the Historical Society and just bum around.]

Definitely a lot of John Randall stuff over there.

[Yeah, yeah, cool. And when is your talk going to be?]

Uh, November, late November, uh 25<sup>th</sup> I think.

[Ok, cause I might try to come back up and...]

Ok, it's out in Brooklyn.

[...ok, that'd be cool.]

Brooklyn Arts Society.

[Now so one thing I'm curious about too is do you ever notice other people walking? Or the way other people walk? ]

Hm. Well you're running into walkers all the time everywhere here. Yeah, I mean, sure...

[Do people walk different ways? You know what I mean? Have you ever thought about just different kinds of walks?]

Well you definitely feel it the rhythm of different walks just as you walk across Manhattan. If you walk, um, yeah, I mean you walk through Times Square, that's an interesting place to look at walkers because, there's a lot of big um like the Conde Nast building, um there's a lot of business there. Isn't Lehmann Brothers there and a lot of other...laughing...

[laughing It might not say Lehmann Brother any more...]

So there's a lot of some the most intense, high-powered business in Manahattan right there and then there's tourists. And um it's just maddening to walk through there. It would be ok if there were just the high-powered business people, but the tourists, stand, you know, come out of the subway and stand. They don't understand how to walk, you know. It's a lot like driving, in New

York, you get your, there's a lane and there's people going and if you stop in the middle of the lane, then the people behind you aren't going to be able to walk. So, um, you definitely see that with tourists, the difference with tourists. And then you get down into Lower Manhattan, particularly those zones where there's just a bunch of businesses, it's not a place for tourists to go and there's maybe a subway there or something. Um everybody knows how to walk and the person who doesn't know how to walk is an anomaly and they totally get in the way and people will verbally abuse them. Um, but , yeah, it's like a street a lot of Manhattan's like a street, if you want to stop and look you gotta pull over to the side...

[You pull over to the curb.]

yeah, you pull over to the side and you can do whatever you want to do. Laughing Yeah, definitely.

[Have you walked in other cities? Major cities, to compare?]

Well, Boston...

[yeah, Boston, any other, like, European cities?]

Uh, not enough to compare really. Yeah, a little in Paris, a little in Madrid. But, I don't know.

[That's interesting, I like that, "They don't know how to walk". ]

It's true, it's true.

[I can totally understand what you mean by that.]

I mean it depends on, they don't know how to walk there.

[Yes.]

They know how to walk in other places. But, but there's different rules there. It's like knowing how to drive, I don't know...

[So, there are rules of the sidewalk...]

Yeah.

[...comparable to rules of the road.]

Like, when you pull onto a busy freeway, even if you don't know didn't know how crazy and busy that freeway's gonna be when you get there, you adjust really quickly, and you learn, and you...

[You go.]

...like yeah, you go. And you're like, everybody's going really quick and I have to go too.(speeds up speech). Uh, with walking, people don't have that, that same sense. Yeah, they just sort of come into this crazy situation and then they don't think to pull over. Yeah, to get out of the way of people going. And because people walk, it's because they're walking, it's because that's how they're getting from Point A to Point B, walking is like people in their cars in New York. It's not like um yeah it's not like going for some little stroll or something. They really are 'in their car' going to work. You know.

[And that's an interesting point because, part of my interest is thinking about walking not just as transportation, but as a way of being in the world. Do people, are there leisure walkers...]

in New York?

[...in New York too? Cause, I think there are, I think I see a lot of people just strolling, other than tourists though, I guess.]

Yeah, I mean in the parks of course a lot. You'll see tons of them. Right, today, you go over to Riverside Park you'll see, yeah, you'll see tons of them over there. Yeah, and they're sort of like, well, I guess that's sort of shopping, which is sort of different. I was just in Soho yesterday and there's a lot of strolling around looking in shops, but you know, like the flâneur, or the...

[I was going to ask you about the flâneur, if flânerie is happening somewhere here in the city...]

Yeah, in Soho, that's definitely what's happening, part of what's happening. Um, yeah, people seeing and being seen and shopping, Yeah. Yeah, definitely....what else is good for walking?

[Yeah...]

Um, I 'm just trying to think good walking, neighborhoods with good walkers in it...um, I think of all those, I don't know if you've been out to Brooklyn, but there's all these um Park Slope, Boarham Hill (?), and Carroll Gardens, and Fort Green, and um There's a lot of, Brooklyn Heights, there's a lot of really beautiful intersecting brownstone neighborhoods just goes on and on and on with a lot of people strolling, lots of strollers.

[I'm going to go over there on Tuesday actually to interview someone over there.]

Yeah. Um, you see them more on the weekends, but um, yeah, lots of strolling out there.

[Ok. ]

And it's a much slower pace, that's still not like some small town or something like that, but it's definitely a different pace. Lots and lots of walking.

[So with your new project, or even your book, are you going to write a book about your new project as well you think?]

I don't think so. I'm putting, I'm doing this video and um, it's going to be something like a website or something, but um probably not a book.

[Is it going to be a documentary?]

Could be. Yeah, sort of like a pseudo-documentary, yeah, it could be something like that. It'll be something.

[Um hum, yeah.]

It's definitely a work in progress. This talk came sooner, you know, I don't know, it's not completely formed yet. By the time I get to the talk, I'll have something to say.

[When I think about your work, I mean, you're doing this definitely because of your passion for it...yet, I have a sense that you hope to, you hope that this stuff reaches somebody. Who do you hope, who do you think of reaching with your, either your book on walking, your website, or you're, this new project if it turns into some...who do you want to reach?]

The website was um was written, I think, by maybe, cause I didn't, I wanted to find a book or resource to read that was pretty much exactly that, and I couldn't find it...

[Ok.]

...um, so, I guess, yeah, I was I just figured there were like-minded people {34:56}

## **APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW-LS100015-MARY**

[You mentioned to me that you've only lived in New York for a couple of years now, but how did you, what motivated you to start doing Walking the Big Apple project?]

O well, I started because I had worked for a year as an art dir. gallery director on the Upper East Side and I wasn't particularly thrilled with the job and I decided to take a break and then think what I was going to do next. And so the first thing that I really needed to do was I needed I wanted to get a handle on my weight and health and so I started walking primarily to lose weight to get my body back in shape but then I took along a notebook and I found myself as I walked I'd stop and sketch and then I'd take uh notes and write about my experiences in the city and that writing part about the city and my experiences of walking and confronting architecture urban design and the visual culture of the city uh uh took over. Uh the sort of the meanings of the walk for me maybe came a means of exploration. And so the writing the writing of my website came out of me showing my journal of my sketches of people on benches in New York and my thoughts about a certain building, I showed it to an to an older artist friend and he said that "you need to put that on the internet". And so I started transcribing my experiences and then I began to realize this is what I want to do I want to walk to explore about myself and to find out about my environment and it connected me in a new way to the city. And it connected me in a very um strong way. But what I learned very quickly is walkers and myself as a flaneuse may learn is that I that that walking stimulates the imagination. And so that I began to have thoughts to me that I believed strongly that could only occur because I was walking and through walking the walking in space through the urban environment through the streets um stimulated such a broad range of associations that that the walking through the streets became a mirror of the tangential mental processes that I was exploring. And so, it became such a series of revelations that I just found myself walking and writing and walking and writing and observing and thinking about the layers of history and the present and the present in the city.

[Mm..mm. I that layers of history because the sidewalk, if it could talk]

Oh indeed, and so I found myself having conversations with Georgia O'Keefe, and Mabel Dodge Luhan, and Greta Garbo, um, once I just remembered my childhood image of Greta Garbo trying to be private on the streets of New York and images of her walking and walking, that's all I wanted to think about. I spent two weeks over at her apartment house over on the East Side 56th 52nd street and thought about what was it like to be one of the most famous movie stars in the world and then come here to seek New York of all places to come here in the 50's to seek a

private life. And people would say “there goes Garbo!” She walked two hours every morning took a lunch and took two hours walked two hours every afternoon.

[Oh really]

And that’s all she wanted to do was to walk through New York.

[Wow]

So, I would connect with her and these people and I’m just now writing about Holly Go Lightly and our perceptions of Breakfast at Tiffany’s. And I’m about to write how much they walked in the original novella and I think of her um as a fictional character. And Truman Capote as well, a Southern writer like myself coming to the city and having those streets and those sidewalks where people were previously to come. And you know in New York it’s those layers of sidewalks that EB White talks about being so daunting that you know this is I’m trying to write but Mark Twain wrote here, and Dryser wrote here, and Edna St. Vincent Milay, and it puts pressure on yourself to know who was on the sidewalk before you and who was in that building next door, and reacting that way to uh the literary history of the street.

[Yes, absolutely. I didn’t know that about Garbo about how much she walked. But, in thinking about just choosing to walk like you walk like Garbo walked, what does that say to others around you? What does that, how does that, what does that communicate, I guess, by choosing to walk like that?]

Um I think for mys, to others, I come off as this big adventurer. And so, that’s fine. I don’t mind being linked to notions of adventurer. I’m sure at times it becomes escape but it’s I think it does convey a willingness to be in the world. That’s the most important thing for me that a signifier of walking is a willingness to be a part of it to engage in it to walk through it to deal with it. My website’s called, “Walking Off the Big Apple” for a reason. It’s, first I was walking off 25 extra pounds. But it has come to mean certainly um if I had a bad day I’ll go walk it off. Or, I feel stressed, I need to walk it off. There’s alot, New York’s very stressful. It can be. I don’t see it any more as that because I’m so aware and conscious of what happens here. But the way I deal with it is to know it and walk it off. For me that involves thinking through it.

[It’s interesting though, you make the point that New York City as a place is a very hectic sort of fast paced um high pressured kind of environment. Would you agree that that’s the case?]

I agree, but I think it's neighborhood based. A lot of the pressure well I think there is a density in mid town that causes more people on the sidewalk. And I'm in the Village, and the pace is a lot slower with the lower height of the buildings, the streets meander..

[this is the old part of the city]

I'm in the old part of the city. And we go off grid right here. And so you especially pass 6th and 7th avenues, it's winding streets that are more 19th century and more afford a leisurely pace. But that's just that there are geographical hectic. However, there is a palpable sense of ambition in this city. People are, and so people are here for a reason. I mean what those of us who come to this city or to move here, have may be involved with "I want to be the best artist" or "I want to be one of the best writers", film critic, what have you. And so, those pressures uh career future fulfilling a kind of potential are rather palpable and significant. So those are the pressures I usually need to walk off.

[I find that fascinating though, the dialectic of that. You know walking and the pressure, that's not the best word to describe it, but in a way that's a, I find that very fascinating to choose a slower mode of like transport or movement that's almost the opposite of that kind of high stakes...]

That's right...

[kind of environment here.]

That's right.

Although you can you can you can see that everyone has a different pace and rhythm in the city

[Mm..mm}

and some of them they're they're they're walking faster for a reason. This one just has a big stride.

[Mm..mm]

Um I I'm very much a I walk slow.

[Do you. That's something that I asked someone that I interviewed yesterday. Um, I'm curious whether whether you spend any time watching other people walk...]



Mm..mm.

[...and whether you've identified any or sort of got some types of walks that you've become familiar with.]

Yeah, yeah, I I...

[like like the gentleman that just walked by.]

Mm..mm. Yeah, he's...

[He's got athletic shoes on.]

Yeah, yeah and I'm fascinated by women who can wear shoes that I can not wear.

Yeah, cause in some people some women they claim that it's really good for their legs and it strengthens their calf muscles. And I'm too much of an old hippie really to think that's quite the case. And so, good old Merrell's, right? And so there's that whole school of we all have wide feet. So it's Merrell's, Clark's, Mephisto's, here's that whole grouping of somewhat...these are not that fashionable, but walking shoes that I need. Because I'm not going to be in pain if I want to go walk through Central Park.

[Uh..huh]

Not those high heels, no.

[No way]

So, I am aware, I actually was sitting on the steps of St. Thomas Church on 5th Avenue, last Thursday, and I'd just been at Tiffany's. And so I was just going there just for my Holly Go Lightly report. And so I sat on the church steps of St. Thomas and I took pictures of people walking by. And so then I became real fascinated by that rhythm of people walking. Boots are fabulous though, you know, I like to wear boots. And they're really fabulous to watch, Cause the uh there's a lot of confidence in people walking with boots. They tend to have a..

[I love, heah, I love...]

...they almost have a march to them.

[Ok, any other kinds of walks you've noticed?]

Yeah, I I've seen, I've seen that, real uptight, clipped, anxious, hurried walk of the busy professional. Uh, I, I can't go there.

[Mm..mm, laughing]

No I'll walk fast you know cause I know it's to raise my heart beats. I know it's good for me. So, I'll do that on occasion. My goshie, I'm what's the word you have in physical education, it's about different pacing, umm, it's where you walk fast and then slow. Or run fast and?

[Like an interval?]

Yeah, it's like interval. Yeah, I'm an interval I'll do interval. But I think all New York is interval walking. Cause we run to catch the cab, we'll run to get the crosslight, and then we'll run to get the train and then we'll slow down to look in front of the window. And then we'll run to get the subway. So it's all interval walking.

[That's interesting. What catches your eye when you walk?]

Um, {pause}, this is something that I've been recently made aware of, it's the distant object. Um, when I'm walking, Paris is a great, great, great, great example of why you can walk so far in Paris, because you know you can, you can, you can orient yourself by being able to see the top of Sacre Coeur, or the Eiffel Tower, or {?}, or La Madeleine, or...there's so many landmarks in the distant horizon that you really can immediately get your bearings. But you also realize it's reasonable. If I can see it I can walk there. And so alot of my eye is caught by, oh, there's the Empire State Building. Um, if I'm at the Empire, if I'm, and I'll push myself a little bit. If I can walk all the way to 110th this way easily, you know, oh I, there's the Pan Am Building, and the Empire State Building, well then that's just a little farther to 5th Avenue. Oh I see the trees opening at Central Park, well if I'm there, and there's that Emmerill Roth Building I know on the West Side, I can walk there. So, so I keep, I probably am aware of foreground, middleground, and background, like a photographer would be.

[Ok, ok. That's interesting]

And also, I do a lot of photography. So, in a good photograph you want to have the foreground, the middle distance, and the far distance. And I think, I think, I probably see like a photographer, or painter. So, and I have an art background. So I'm probably...

[That makes sense]

...and architecture background. So...architecture...I'm quite, enormously aware of that. And I'm aware of sp, space, and open spaces, and where there's not any.

[Uh huh, uh huh...]

So New York is very good for finding little places. But umm, the Situationists, Guy Debord? I recently read a lot of Situationists anthologies, the Situationist anthologies, the their *dérive*, the *dérive*...

[*dérive*...]

was of course unplanned but it was where that thing in the landscape took them. Often times that was their visual cue. And so, I, I feel, I feel that's good if I can allow myself, as, oh I see you know that building over there. Let me think of a whimsical way to arrive at that place.

[How interesting. What fun. Do you find it fun?]

Oh my gosh, well because the walking has opened up the Situationists, and photography, and architecture. It opens up so many spaces. You know I was, my background is in interdisciplinary in American studies.

[Ok]

I was trained as a, in American cultural history. And so I had read, read a lot of this work before I even started my blog. And so, my thesis advisor, Bill Stott, was just here, and he was thrilled that I was able to incorporate everything I did in graduate school under this rubric of walking and urban history. And so it's been the place where I could feel most comfortable with some authority. But it would give me a really different way to talk about the city than a sight seeing guide or a simple travel guide, and get people to think about the meanings of people who've lived here and experiencing it this way through, through walking.

[Mm..mm. Who do you hope to reach? because I guess I think of you as a writer because of the Walking Off the Big Apple..]

Yeah...mm..mm.

[Who was your intended audience?]

Oh, adventurous people who want to come to New York. And, but also, I recently it's not so much New York it's just about, um, my audience should be people who, {pause}, I think there's

several audiences. People who want to explore the city, and, and, and will get away from just jumping on the Gray..the tour line busses.

[The Grayline...]

The Grayline busses. And this is, and these financial difficulties, these times, walking's free. It's a great way, and you learn more, you explore more, you come upon your own experiences rather than the predetermined experience of the packaged tour. So I guess I want to get to people beyond to consider more than the package tour, to get off the bus.

[laughing]

I guess that, I guess that's the whole thing right there, is that I want everyone to get off the bus, and it could also, that's beyond just the New York tourism part, you know, look at where you are. It could, and, I think what I write about can open up, oh, maybe this is how I want to explore Urbana-Champaign, and Austin, TX, or, you know, small towns in Liverpool. And people have written me that way definitely. What, one of the nicest letters I got recently was from a woman who has MS and she's confined to a wheelchair and said that my blog freed her.

[Oh, wow...]

Um, and that made me so, made me feel so good. My brother had polio young he's 12 years older. And he's in a chair as well, so I know, and I've been sensitive more than others maybe even to, I don't take walking for granted.

[Yeah]

But for her to say that, it's, she felt like she could leave her chair. That's a wonderful thing.

[Oh, that's touching.]

It was touching. A lot of British people, and French people read, get ahold of my blog because they're more used to, they're culturally, to walking.

[Ok]

And so, I found um I'm writing more, having sort of off the blog conversations with people in Europe. Just real fun...

[Oh excellent]

...and so they respond to that. (time: 20:07)

I don't think too much about my, why, I, I know who, people come to the blog to read about a more af, you know, affordable New York and many of these walks in classic New York walks, and so, that, that's really good. But, I try to keep a kind of intuitive thing going about this is what I need to say and what I need to explore, and hope that the audience follows.

[There are a lot of walkers in New York. In fact, the Federal Highway Commission has a report that says there are more people who walk say, to work every day in New York City than any other major city. Over nine million people every day, that's about 5.6% of the population here walk to work. What do you think that's about? Why would that be the case?]

{pause} If, well, I, I think it goes back to the urban history of the city. Um, the city was developed with pre-automobile; doesn't work very well for automobiles. Um, but the people are used to, um, it's also mixed use development, has always been part of New York. So, that you, and we've done these terrible things out in the suburbs of having a zoned, zoning where there's retail and there's...{phone ringing}...that's me. I'm not going to worry about it. And, but here you can live where you work. Work upstairs...work down, retail and then apartments above. So, I think that the city is, was dense, it has a bigger density. So, I don't think it's definitely because people like it. I just...

[You don't think so? You think it's a...]

...um, no. There's no place to park.

[(laughing) A necessary evil perhaps?]

Yeah, but I think they've developed patterns over the years of, of, of, of walking that, they raise their children to walk, and the people who move here. I think that though if they've lived somewhere else it's really a liberating thing to...we sold two cars and a house and we don't miss them at all. You know...I, I've never once missed my car.

[That's interesting.

It's real interesting cause I'm from Texas, and I was behind a big, red Jeep for years. And I thought well that cars equal freedom. Therefore if I don't have a car I'm not free. And then its so funny that when I was in the South, that I, when I did walk, from the University of South Carolina back home, people would see me on the ss, walking, they'd say, they'd think my car was in the shop or something bad had happened to me. Maybe though, so, it's nice to be in a city

where we all do walk. I think, I think, um, I think we're really accustomed to it and I think there, we've lump, many of us have come to really cherish the walks. When I did walk, when I did work uptown, boy did I love that walk back home. I mean, I didn't walk from 81st street, but I loved walking to the...

[What was the feeling about that, that you loved it so much?]

Oh well, there was two facets, one it was sort of walking is free, I could walk away. We do have these metaphors that are still useful, when you walk away from something. Or walk toward something. And that walking away was letting something go and processing it, and so I did. Walking really does, as opposed to getting into an automobile, getting stressed out in traffic, walking away from work, or walking away from that issue, allow that kind of processing, and that gradual transition to, ok, I'm leaving work, and I will soon be home, but I can experience the day, and the light, and the sunshine, and the trees, and hear the sounds of the street. And this is a very beautiful town.

[Uh..huh, it is]

And, I'd just take the subway, and I'd get off over here, and then I emerge from the subway, and I would go, awww, I'm in Greenwich Village, I'm home. Cause that was, people really do identify with their neighborhoods here and I really have. And, so I, it just felt to me where I could really let my hair down, and it wasn't uptight any more, and, there was even a different feel of the walking down here than there is uptown.

[How would you describe that difference?]

Here it's more, it, it feels looser and more free, and it feels happier, um and it, but uptown it's with determination, I've got to do this, I've got to do that.

[Interesting. Ok. I'll notice that when I walk back. Because I'll, I don't know if I'll walk the entire way, because it's kind of a lot of walking in one day.]

No, no, yeah, you've already done your bet. Walking downtown seems, I think it's psychological, um about walking downtown.

[How so?]

I feel like it's going down hill.

[Oh, interesting.]

Part of it is, um, Lennox Hill and Carnegie Hill and a lot of the places I walk uptown are really on hills, and so, and so there is, I, walking downtown, is, um, there may be a slight declention anyway. Uh huh, and I feel, wooh, walking downtown and jump, you can jump in the river, jump in the New York Harbor. I tend to walk, if I'm walking out of my house, uh, my tendency is to walk downtown to the water.

[Ok, uh huh.]

Or, it's not far that way to the water either. And boy is it fun to a well walk just over in this neighborhood. Make your way to the West, through West Village to the um the walkway down there and then it should be all mostly all connected, You can walk all the way down and through the tip, down under. It's the Esplanade's, Battery Park are tremendous.

[Now the kind of walking that you do, you can walk for hours. Am I right?]

I think, pretty, I'm pretty much now. I can walk for hours. And it doesn't bother me. 8-10 is the most I do in a day, 8-10 miles. Um but what I,I frequently less it's more of the around five miles. That's the tempo.

[That's a good. It is it is.]

So I, I tend to do five miles it's more typical five miles on most days of the week. I do rest up, cause I do have feet, knees, joints...

[Has it worked for you? I know you initially started out to sort of get in shape.]

Yeah.

[Have you gotten in shape pretty much?]

Well I'm still a little over weight, but I feel, oh yeah, yeah.

[Now someone who walks in that, that far, or that long, takes the time to do that, what kind of values does that person have, do you think?]

I can not speak for others...

[Well for yourself then.]

I do have probably counter cultural values. I am a little anti-establishment. I'm, I feel my time on earth is valuable to me. And I like, would like to control my own pace and rhythm and not have it determined by others. And so, I value, I value other people and the earth. And I value freedom. And I value, I won't go so far as to say I'm an anarchist, because I'm not quite there. But I do believe in some, in some inherent 'goodnesses' of people. And I'm op, I am very open to differences. I think someone who walks is committing, well, has, probably is willing to test, test boundaries. Um, I've gone into neighborhoods I probably shouldn't have gone into, just because I, I wanted to not pay attention to, to conventional wisdom. And it's been great.

[(laughing) What were your rewards in doing that?]

Oh, um, it's almost the reward of knowing that fear is conquerable, and seeing places, or being with people I wouldn't have gone otherwise. And, it's also just, wow, I walked that far by myself? I did that? I'm so good.

[That's good. Do you have a dog?]

I have two dogs. I have a fox terrier and a big dog who's a, who's very popular in this park. She's half Rottweiler and half Chow.

[Oh my gosh.]

I mean she's gorgeous. She looks like Greta Garbo. She is, if she's the Greta Garbo of dogs, people ask to take pictures of her.

[Oh, that's great.]

I have a picture of her.

[I'd love to see it. I um, I'm teaching part-time at Old Dominion University, so I'm living in Norfolk, Virginia right now.]

Oh you are? Fabulous. "Naw-fuk".

[And I had to, I had a little Maltese, and I, I left him at home with family. We couldn't find an apartment. But I sure miss him.]

Aww...well let's see. There must be in my pictures {pause}. Ah, photos, new phone.

[I-phone?]



Uh huh. Kind of fun. I've had several comments, or I've talked to a lot of people, walkers, about their mixed feelings about GPS.

[What are there feelings? What's mixed?]

Well, mix is, to not be so aware of where you are on the map. A willingness to get lost as opposed to knowing exactly where you are.

[Do you use GPS sometimes on your walks?]

Well, I get lost in the West Village. An area I should know very well, but I'm thinking, where is this place, and how have I turned around so bad, so much?

[I found that to be the case when I was in Paris, and I wonder if the streets are sort of similar in that way. I would like a block and it would have a different street name then. And I'd be, then suddenly I'd be on a different street, but it was the same street, you know, I mean in terms of the pavement. But I got lost a lot when I was in Paris, cause it was just...]

I sort of blew this one up.

[That is a beautiful dog!]

Yeah, she's really, really beautiful.

[How old is she?]

Uh, eight. We were on the beach. Oh yeah, here's a really bigger one.

[That's a good one.]

Yeah, she has a beautiful face.

[She looks so friendly.]

She's not, but she's. And there's the cute little terrier eating a crab. We vacationed in Maryland, the shore. He's a real cutie.

[Yeah, I love dog's. I really miss mine.]

Did I answer your questions?

[I've got a couple more. Let's see. Well, um, are there leisure walkers? Is what you do for leisure, or is it purposeful, and are there, I ask this question because it's apparent that there are a lot of people who walk to get from point A to point B,..]

Oh yeah, I'm a leis...yeah...

[Are there...]

There're plenty. I'm a leisure walker, there are lots of leisure walkers. But, it, I think there are people back in touch with experiences they had as children. You know some friends and I who came to visit me, who're my age, our age, said you know we used to go walking after dinner, or on Sunday all the time, and so, so this was really wonderful for people to get in touch with, you know, let's go out for a stroll. We used to after Thanksgiving dinner, we would, in Dallas, we would go out, and the family would take a walk. Sometimes we would gather leaves and stuff and decorate the table, and, um, and there was, it was before the Sunday drive, but there was a time in our lives where, where we just did that. And so I think people are back in touch with that. And the people who grew up here, and live here, are definitely, would go out for a stroll to get out of the house, to, to, the pleasures of walking through the park. God you know, there are a lot of people here who go to Central Park just to walk. Um, here, not so much a war has developed between the walkers and the bicyclists, but it's getting there. Um...

[What's happened?]

...we had, I wrote a popular post on this actually. This city in the summer tried an experiment where they shut Broadway off for four Saturdays. And, so I had this vision of , la la la la la, walking up Broadway to Park Avenue wherever it was, and the peop, those of us who were walkers were about to get run over. Because it's always open to cyclists. And they were, "zoom", "zoom", "zoom", and I couldn't, and I thought it was going to be relaxed. But I couldn't relax with these people going on there bicycles. So, so walkers very are different, very much different, in their leisure mode than cyclists, because, because of our pace. Cause it's a very different way of experiencing the world, walking, than "zoom", than having the landscape zoom by like that. Not a lot into speed. But cyclists are often into speed.

[Yeah]

Um, there are a few I can see la, la, la on the bicycle, but it's really...

[The fancy bikes? I noticed a lot of cyclists, with the gear on, and you know, the cleats.]

...oh yeah, because they have to have all that stuff. It's New York, you know, there's a lot of status in your bike. And walking, walking, we don't care really.

[(laughing)]

My most fashionable acoutrement is, I splurged on a kind of designer backpack. But that's because I carry a backpack wherever I go because I need my bottled water, my camera, my notebook, and my, all my necessary, maps.

[I'm kind of the same way.]

And I have the block by block one, this is really helpful to me because it's so extremely detailed for my work. I was going to go up to the East 70's today. And so I thought, well, yeah this is exactly the area I want to walk in.

[Ok. Any particular goal in mind? Do you go to a place and then just decide what your topic is, or how do you do that?]

A lot of what I've written about over the past year is probably popular literature about New York, or how New York has trans, how it has in the popular imagination. And so, Mame Dennis was, auntie Mame, all that stuff was one way. And then I'll write about Georgia O'Keefe, just because I find her fascinating. And that, and then I would put two and two things together, like, mmm, Georgia O'Keefe, New York, Radiator Building, uh, well, Fifth Avenue, oh. And so who else was on Fifth Avenue? Well Mabel Dodge is on Fifth Avenue, and how did both these women end up in New Mexico? So, how can I make Fifth Avenue end in Taos, New Mexico? So, a lot of it, and those kind of connections come through walking, just cause I think better when I'm walking. So, so, so that, but I've always had in the back of my mind right now to do Breakfast at Tiffany's, because we're suut people, I keep seeing these girls, they're twenty years old, out in front of Tiffany's store, and they're dressed up like Audrey Hepburn with the cigarette holder, and the glasses, and the black dress, and I think, God, that movie's been out since '61, and that's still so...

[Iconic]

...iconic. Yeah, that's right, it's iconic. And you get up to 59th and Fifth and these little stands they sell these little five dollar pictures of Audrey Hepburn as Holly Go Lightly. And then I re-read the story, and it's about this poor girl from Tulip, Texas, who's a depression era kid, and then I think well, God, you know, there's something I can identify with, cause I come from, my

mother's maiden name is Pollygolightly, or Polligelitly. And so I have all these personal connections to that, and then I read the book, and it says, a Brownstone in the East 70's, and I say, well that's easy. So I'm headed to the Brownstones in the East 70's, and so that gives me, that's my way in is looking at the landscape, as literary and physical and what is in the current day, and just how that you know, how that reinforces in some ways New York dream, how it challenges it a lot. Most New York novels are very, highly realistic. And, um, actually contrarian. And that if I seriously read all the New York literature, I would really be too frightened to move here.

[(laughing) Would you?]

Yeah, yeah but you see the movie, you see Blake Edwards, uh, movie of Breakfast at Tiffany's and you don't get any of the harsh reality, you get, "oh my God it's so beautiful and glamorous".

[Uh huh, because that's how it's presented.]

How it's presented. Yeah.

[You're good, sounds like you're really astute at making connections. So, I'm curious uh, you know in my field most as I mentioned before we actually started interviewing, a lot of what is done in terms of research and focus in my field is related to the activity of walking in terms of health and wellness benefits. And, so I've wondered and really would like to know what you think about, um, when you think of the literature, the story Breakfast at Tiffany's, what you write, what other New York writers have written that incorporate a point of view related to walking, how could we, how might you imagine, say, the common person pulling something from that that would get them off the couch?]

Oh, well, ...

[Cause I think to me there's something about literature. What do you think that is that could make that connection with the everyday person that might inspire them to walk?]

You, I would hope, some people have written me that they've been stimulated to walking and getting off the couch, because I do walk about walking from here to there and the there is so fantastic, that the only way to do it though is to get up and go and walk out the door. Um, it's the sense that I would like to share in that adventure too. Um, I would like to be like her in some ways, I would like to identify and have that kind of adventurous spirit and the way I can do it is

to relate to and to know that I'm not a super athlete, But, I think what we've done is we've professional..., we've, we've, we've, oh this is, I'm going to get off on this now,...

[Good, go with it.]

we've turned walking into we've turned all athl, anything that might have athletic benefits into an industry. So that people think they need to walk 10,000 steps, with athletic shoes, and go like that...

[Swinging arms]

...and swinging arms and that it's divorced from your real normal life. Where your real, my normal life is, involves sitting, and eating, and walking, and blah blah blah, walking my dogs. Walking dogs is, well people don't even do that, they have a backyard they just let fido go in the backyard. But in New York we have to walk our dogs so we get used to doing this, walking is part of our lives. But if if we could just not treat all of that stuff as a separate category that's good for us, and that could, and that we could make it fun and I don't know...

[Ok. So is that sense sense of fun you communicate or that the literature might...]

the literature might help with the communicating some of this. Cause I've taken that WalkingOffTheBigApple.org as a domain name cause I have eventual plans that I would like to find the ways to make that connection with people. Or take kids off the couch and get them into, let's go see this, let's see how f, let's go touch the Empire States Building and then touch the Chrysler Building and let's make a game out of our cityscapes.

[That's and interesting, do you see many kids walking? Or is it mostly adults you see walking?]

Oh, I see kids walking. They usually, they're walking home from school, walking.

[I'm sure that happens a lot, like getting to and from work for adults, getting to and from school for kids.]

Yeah.

[Ok. Um what does it add to your life personally doing your projects with Walking the Big Apple, finding these connections. What's that add to your, to your life?]

It defines it. I mean, I really found myself this way. Because when I was working um, on a job, um, I wasn't doing anything, I was doing things that I thought would be good for my career, but

they weren't good for myself. But then when I created this walking self, of Walking Off the Big Apple, and having a dear friend say, making that flaneur connection for me early on, he called me a flaneurette, after the {unclear} Rangerettes. Flaneur, flaneurette, that's fantastic.

[That is fantastic]

And, I really I was in um, before I was in American Studies, I was in political theory. And I read all, Walter Benjamin, and, and I was familiar with a lot of the flaneur literature, and then so I um hooked up with the guys from the Flaneur website in Liverpool, who are so funny. They're so funny. So, I loved them so much, um, and, so once I had all the 19th Century literary baggage with my Texas boots, um I thought well you know that really comes close to really who I am. You know, it's the French speaking flaneuse that says "Hi Youall". And so, um, and then I'm in New York. So, so, so it, it did, it enriched my life and it, all that, having the website, taking these walks have been an experience in themselves. They push open new doors constantly, and then um, the correspondence I have with people, um, um my real job's now, um, I'm a consultant for the Tribeca Film Institute, Managing Editor of Moving Image Journal, but that's all came because people saw my website and they wanted for me to apply what I do with my website skills to their work and open up an audience and have a generalized audience, they could expand audiences. So, so I started off and this site doesn't make any money and I don't care about it, but it has opened, and a Stanley Fish is quoting me in the New York Times on a Sunday!

[Oh, that's great!]

I'm like, when would that have happened to little old me had I not stepped out on a limb to do this. You know? So, it's that kind of thing and then having then, you know, the art historian that I told you about, who died when she was 50, who wrote this great brilliant essay on French Impressionism? Well her spouse is at the Baltimore Sun and finds it, writes me a letter, all of her family write me letters, saying it was so wonderful you mentioned Nancy. Aw, this is so great. And so, just having this, and then someone in South Amboy, New Jersey, logs on every single morning, to read my, I know, who that person is? But, there are 500 that have read the blog at least 200 times. So there's, I don't know who, but it's great, you know, just that um, I would have a dream about being a writer in New York. And so, here I am a writer in New York. But the only way I became a writer in New York was I started walking and looking around, and then this became the means in the new media too.

[Yeah, that helps a lot. Well, sounds like to me you're already in a position with the Tribeca Film Institute sought you out to reach more people, and you're reaching people on your website, those, those that log in every day. They're getting something from you.]

Yeah, yeah.

[Any idea what it is they're getting?]

Well, I tend to be enthusiastic. And so, so that's apparently not everyone is. And so I tend to be able to motivate people. Just cause I'm silly, I have this infectious enthusiasm, I think. And part of it is that I'm completely immature for my age. I have, I think they do like that I have a sort of youthful esprit de corps. To use a French phrase.

[Very nice. I like it. You mention the flaneur, flaneurie, flaneuse. And a, is that kind of thing still happening you think?]

Uh huh!

[And if so, where?]

Mm mm. Fifth Avenue I think happens. And I think it happens in Central Park. I think there's some classic locations were important in the flaneur's monde, demi monde. They were in the demi monde weren't they? Uh, those rascals. Their bull (?) of the avenues were important in 19th Century in New York in the flaneur's hey day, as well as Central Park. You read it in Wharton, Henry James and Edith Wharton, cause we got Henry James living over here, and Edith Wharton over here, and I just finished last month I wrote about Lillie Barth from House of Mirth. And Wharton deliberately uses the word 'strolling' at the beginning of the novel to refer to what Lillie Bart and her boy, her lame suitor, when they were strolling on Madison Avenue. Strolling had a certain kind of class thing to it. But at the end of the novel when she's poor, she's lost everything, and she's in dire straits and living in the garment district, she's walking by necessity. So it's very interesting that it became some kind of class issue. So, so, I think, I think, a flaneur is definitely someone who is is a bit there to be seen too. Um as well as to look out, to observe. And, hipsters, even kids t, um, are very much making the flaneur scene in their punk clothes over in the Bowery, when they're walking up and down the Bowery near the new museums. So, so that's a real 19th Century place. But I think Upper East Side where clothes still define the women, flaneurs still exist out on a walk.

[Ok. Gathering in the sights. Ok. That's cool. That's great. Ok.]

There's a great flaneur art exhibit. It's at MOMA. It's the Berlin one. It's Kirschner's Berlin Streets. It's fantastic. He, when he moved to Berlin in 1901, he was a kid from a small town in Germany, he gets to Berlin and everyone's out in the streets. And so, he's fascinated by prostitutes, he paints them strutting the streets of New York. It's a gorgeous, gorgeous show. But, but he has some, some of the German words on the paintings or sketches, he'll refer to flaneur or flaneurinden and, as upper class walkers on the Berlin streets. Some are the (unclear) the streetwalkers, the literal streetwalkers, the prostitutes. And so, when you think about streetwalkers and flaneurs you get a real good sense of Victorian Europe.

[Now sounds to me like you've done a lot of reading of that time period, 19th Century walking, and history, and literature. Um, is there anything that you can think of that we can bring from that point in time to the present? To tell us something about our lives and walking today.]

You know, I think, I think there's a lot in Henry David Thoreau's essay. You know, what's that, from the 1840's? I'm trying to remember, because I wrote about it when I was in New England last summer. I was thinking though that might be the closest thing, it's an opposite land from Balzac because he's not in Paris.

[It is.]

And, he's not at all in a social world. You know Thoreau's so anti-people really. He may preach democracy, but he really doesn't like other people. And he's, but there is that, but I think people still value notions of personal freedom. And I think it would help them a lot more if they realized that could begin with their own two feet. So, the way I would get into Thoreau and people like him is to connect walking with freedom, like the Situationists too with Venus(?) camp. And so instead of being the pitiful pastime of hobos and streetwalkers...

[It's gotten kind of a bum rap over the years. I wanted to, I actually made a copy of, you may already have seen Balzac's axioms that I had translated.

Were they in that document you sent me?

[Yeah. Here.]

Yeah, yeah, this is great.

[And I guess, I wondered if you had any thoughts, if there are any of those that you find particularly relevant today or even in, acknowledging that the language is very 19th Century, and



the perspective is very 19th Century. Anything you find particularly compelling or relevant about any of those as they apply today to the walking environment?]

(pause) There is a little, a little yogic(?) isn't it? There's a sort of a sense, I'm thinking of what Balzac looked like, being huge and drinking 18 million cups of coffee a day.

[He did, yes.]

To read about tranquility, and the sublime, slow movement. I relate to, "slow movement is of itself sublime." Sublime is I think as an art historian, was a very definite meaning of the phrase. The sublime is what transcends words. But I like that, that sense of slow movement, and tranquility, and it seems a good way to counteract the frenzied excess all these words are dialectic aren't they?

[They really are. Very much so.]

Yeah.

[It was interesting because just to put this in a context, um, it was written in 1833, and he actually set himself up in this project as sort of a scientist. He got a chair, he set it out on Boulevard Haussmann, and watched people walk.]

That's great.

[But he also incorporated his own walking because he, in his essay, he talks about walking, like behind people, sort of listening to conversation. So he did a lot of walking himself in the city to think, and to explore people, and learn about the culture. But then he sat and watched people too. And, this is what he came up with.]

Yeah, that's wonderful. I read, I want to read through your translation again, but I was struck how much he did, he was analytical about it. Cause I expected something, I guess I didn't expect that so how much, how scientific method he, it was. It's funny. Cause, so much of the first of it was, "no one's every done this before".

[The science of walking.]

"I've been looking high and low and I can't find anything about walking. You would think people, it's so common, you'd think someone would've written about it. But there wasn't." Am I right?

[Yes, yeah.]

And so, and then I was laughing at all these things about how women walk. That made me laugh.

[Movement of the skirt.]

Yeah, that made me laugh. It's probably, he was such a guy.

[He was such a womanizer.]

Yeah,.

[So in this sense, he was sort of identifying the way people walk, and he talked about styles, and like the way the belly can sort of take over the walk, was one of his examples in his essay. Um, do you think that (he would say yes to this question), but do you think that the way that people walk says something about them?]

Yeah, um, there's this fantastic theatre director at Dallas Theatre Center named Paul Baker, he was there forever, and he's very influential acting teacher. And, his school of training actors was to say that every character has a rhythm and their rhythm is manifested in their walking. And so, he believed that in actor training, you think about their character, and you think about their physic, is it like jazz, is it syncopated, or is it more waltz-like, what kind of rhythm do they have, and then, you began to start walking in that rhythm, and I, and I think, I think, um, there's some truth in that in my experience. I, you could alter your own rhythms. She was a psychotherapist. The daughter of this theatre director was a psychotherapist. And so, it was amazing, I'll get back to this point. My parents sent me to this theatre center when I was a child, Frank Lloyd Wright theatre, it was so beautiful. And it had a lot to do, I think with my imagination and why I'm who I am. So, this man taught all these actors about these theories of rhythm and the human body and physiognomy and walking. And then his daughter becomes a psychotherapist, and she happens to be at the University of Texas, where I'm in grad school, and I had a hard time with my mother had some difficulties, physical difficulties, and I had to leave Austin right before my PhD comprehensive exams to take care of my mom. And my mom wound up in the hospital, some of it was psychological. So I needed some therapy because I was overwhelmed. So I went, and it turned out to be Paul Baker's daughter. And she said, "do you remember about my Dad's theories of rhythm?" She said, I'm really just now thinking about how I can use this in here in these places. And she said, "you're just so strung out and going too fast right now." She said, "what if we, what if you adapt a different rhythm. What if you tried to get into a place where it's fun." More slow movement. And, that helped me so much. And it affected the way I walked, it

gave me a stronger sense of control. And so, I'm aware that if I am anxious, I will walk faster. This ones just for...

[Interesting]

So, anyway, So, yes, the answer is yes, I believe everyone walks differently.

[Sort of to wrap this up then, just tell me a story about your, one of your favorite walks. Like a story.]

Oh, well,...

[Things you noticed...where you went.]

I, I, I, of all the walks since the beginning of the year, um, this is most memorable. I was walking up in the East 50's I guess, and I was on the East River, and I was walking along the East River esplanade walkway, it was the worst walk I've ever been on in my life. It was next to the FDR highway, and there were really, it was, it was a dysutopia (dystopia). It was a, cars were pouring, and there was smog, I was breathing smog, and yet there's this tiny little walkway next to the East River. And it smelled bad, and there were fumes, and it was, and I thought, "this is the biggest waste of time I've ever had in my life." And then so I get off wherever it was it was at 57th street, and I walked over to 2nd Avenue, and I saw the trolley to Roosevelt Island (you know about?). And I thought, "God, maybe I can redeem this awful experience." So I jump, I'd never been to Roosevelt Island, I got on the trolley, and I got over to Roosevelt Island, and then I went to, there's a little visitor center next to the trolley stop on the side, I said, "what do you do here?" And the woman said, "most people go see the ruins of the smallpox hospital." I said, "I want to see that."

[laughing]

And so, I walked then down just south of there a mile of where the visitor's center, along the East River on the other side from where I had this horrible experience. And there's this oasis of sanity. And then I got to the end, and there is this wild, green park that like something out of Wuthering Heights. And there is emerging in these trees are these gothic ruins of a smallpox hospital that used to be there. And so, it is like this painting, a pastoral painting. And then beyond that is all this wild, this point of greenery, that, um, where you come to that point. And I walked, and I was the only one there. And I turned around, and there's the great Manhattan skyline, over on the, it was over to my West. And then I saw this beautiful, unmarked wild part

of Manhattan. I turn around and there's these Gothic ruins. And I think, wow. You know I have, I have, I really have made a journey from the bad urban experience to finding buried treasure, these unique wonders.

[Yeah]

So...and that's where you want to end up as a walker, you want to find that place wherever it is.

[Yeah, the treasure. It's interesting that you use that word, because I think that that's often the case. When you walk, you find little treasures.]

My most popular post so far in this website, my website, was after I got home, why isn't Roosevelt Island our Isle de la Cité? And I said, Notre Dame, these ruins. Uh, the Island was built as the asylum, and as Isle de la Cité was the place where they put patients...

[It wasn't it?]

...uh huh, and also large Prefecture of Police that was also Roosevelt Island. And so, I wrote this essay. It made me very popular with Roosevelt Island. But I compared, I pulled out the google maps too of Isle de la Cité and Roosevelt Island, and I said Roosevelt Island is the new Paris. Which if people thought about it it's just a funky planned city, but then the parallels were very interesting. Um when I came to think of it. Anyway, so that's, that was my story, I think, and it's just a modest story of a beginning of a walk, and walking through something and over something, and arriving at a place where you didn't expect to arrive, and you've learned something in the process.

[That's really neat, special. Yeah. Anything you want to just say before we end the interview that I haven't asked or that you want to make sure that I know about?]

No, I think we've, we've, you know I really, this is the most important, I think we've covered the most important things. I think you asked really good questions.

[Thank you. Well, I really appreciate your willingness to do this...]

It's been a pleasure, a complete pleasure.

## APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW-LS100016-MICHAEL

[What brought you to walking originally?]

Well, I did walk a lot, as a young man especially ... It was one of the ways I got to escape my family and to explore New York City and it was cheap you know very important. Certainly I felt a kind of connection between walking and writing, walking and composition. Anything rhythmic you know, Some writers think that train trips because of the kind of a lulling quality of the movement, ...

Apollinaire thought that you know, walked around ... and Gertrude Stein was the same way she walked around and would compose her long paragraphs in *The Making of Americans* while walking around Paris and Apollinaire composed his poems the same way so one thing that interested me... that I've really been interested in for want of a better word, endlessness which is procedures that threaten or provoke the writer by not seeming to conclude in any logical manner. If you write a short story about the summer when you lost your virginity or whatever, there's an ending. But on a walk, you perceive so many things, how do you know how to shape it? So it's very promising and also daunting. And I've always been very interested in the progression between inner and outer. My gut religion is that the consolation [?] of the material world is the closest I come to spirituality so I've never been drawn to transcendence or to the unseen, rather I have taken my consolation from the concreteness of things the materiality of things the endurance of things. I was very drawn Antonio [unclear] films when I was younger and one of the things Antonio would do was he would keep the camera running after his characters walked out of the frame and then you would see the obdurate and consoling world without the human beings in it and it's something that [unheard] did as well in his shots of depopulated interiors or landscapes. So, I, being overly sensitive adolescent tormented and so on, liked the fact that the world presented itself in every changing forms as I was walking through it. Certainly it was important that I was in New York City because it happens to be a place that offers up continuously changing sensations. Many times I've been other places and felt chagrined or frustrated trying to walk because there didn't seem to be enough visual stimuli and I didn't know how to read the landscape, I didn't know the names of trees for example. and other people who were more attuned to variations in landscape would see a richness rather than a repetition. But in NY there is this um surprising random serendipitous profusion of incident one person after another you never know what's coming at you one store after another you could look at street level traffic, you could look at a second story event you could look at the tops of buildings you could look in the distance and so this became my process I to go inside this locked corridor of my mind and to be brought out of it, out of that claustrophobia by the sensory world

[What about the act of walking itself? Because that is very repetitive and you mentioned the word rhythmic. How do you think about the physicality of the act itself and the connections in space in those places you describe?]

I am about 6 ft tall, so half of me is legs so, I'm conscious when I start walking sometimes fairly rapidly it bothers my wife she says sometimes she feels like someone in an orthodox society suddenly she's two steps behind me so I do associate walking a great deal with being alone. There have been times when I walk through the city with friends and that's been important, but

as Haslet says in his essay on going on a journey, to him he connects walking with being alone ... so there is this sense in walking that you know the soles of your feet will tell you where to go; that they have their own minds you know. And it can be very sudden like you come to the edge of a sidewalk and whether to keep going forward or to make a right or left turn depends on a number of factors, whether there's an opening or just a kind of sudden impatience, I think that walking you know you can adapt walking to your sense of energy or tiredness very easily so there are times when I suddenly find myself walking slowly and it isn't necessarily because I'm in a more interesting place it's because I'm just obeying a signal from my body that says 'you have to slow down, you have to rest'. As I pointed out, NY is not a very restful city, it doesn't squares piazas, or plazas, it doesn't have many opps for resting. Until very recently it didn't have very many outdoor cafes. The laws against restaurants putting chairs out have since been rescinded, but this is one of the continuous concerns of the urbanist is what is the right of the pedestrian? What is the right of the automobile? What is the right of the vender who is selling things out in the street. I've been on committees at the municipal arts society where they take up issues of um-you know the newspaper dispensers and how many should be permitted how they should be grouped. It's all under the street furniture so if you have people sitting in cafes and chairs outside does that limit or restrict the movement of pedestrians. So there is a kind of class warfare between the stationary and the moving, between the automotive and the pedestrian. So I identify with the pedestrian, I keep moving even though it can be tiring.

I certainly feel for a writer that walking is very important having nothing to do with composition, simply because if you are a writer you sit at your desk a lot and you tend to get tensions around the neck and shoulders, many writers who are friends of mine have neck and shoulder problems, so walking becomes a way of you know, getting rid of that stiffness. In terms of transportation, it often is a more reliable way of getting from one place to another. Trains can break down and busses get in traffic and so often you're on a bus and thinking, gee I could do this faster if I was walking [yeah, I've taken buses in the city and I did it mainly because I could site see at a very slow pace] So I hope that somewhat answers your question of physiology, I'm not that athletic, I play some tennis, but basically my only consistent exercise is walking.

[Have you noticed, or identified kinds of walks? Like as you observe other people]

You know that essay, by Evan Danby [?] dances buildings and people on the street. I quote it in waterfront, but... it talks about the kinds of walks. I know Ben Jack (?) wrote something...- (looking it up). He says 'One can get along in life perfectly without looking much. You all know how very little one is likely to see happening in the street, [unclear] but for me, even a familiar street at a familiar time of day while one is using the street to get somewhere, so much is happening inside one, one's private excitements and responsibilities one can't find the energy to watch the strangers passing by or the architecture or the weather around them feels there's no, there's a use in getting to a place one is heading for and doing something while they're there getting a book or succeeding at a job or discussing a situation with a friend. All that has a use, but what use is there of looking at the momentary look of a street at 106 and Broadway? No use at all. Looking at a dance performance has some use presumably and is certainly is a great deal less exhausting than looking at the disjointed fragments of an impression of what one can see in traffic.' But then he talks about the contrepasto movements of people in the street and the he says 'you should see how harmoniously the young men in Italy can loll the American young men

loll quite differently, resting on a peripheral point. Italians loll resting on a more central one, Italians on the street, boys and girls, both have an extraordinary sense of the space they really occupy. And of filling that space harmoniously as they rest or move. Americans occupy a much larger space than their actual bodies do. I mean to follow the harmony of their movement or of their lolling you have to include a much larger area in space than they are actually occupying. That annoys many Europeans, it annoys their instinct of modesty, but it has a beauty of its own that a few of them appreciate it has, so to speak an intellectual appeal. It has because it refers to an imaginary space an imaginary volume not to a real and visible one.

Ok so he's talking about how Americans move and the way Puerto Ricans move and [unclear] I think that ethnically there is vast difference in the way Blacks move and even the way Blacks from Africa move or blacks from the south and Hispanics even giving so much flavor to the streets and to NYC. You know I notice, the city has a great deal of Asians in it and Asians move with a different sense of purpose. Hispanics often have more fluidity in the lower parts of their body, Asians often move very purposefully and steadfastly without seeming to move the bottom parts of their body. So, some people move, some people when they walk, walk in a very self-absorbed manner, even muttering to themselves or whatever, and some move kind of walking around. You generally can tell a tourist from a native New Yorker just by their the way their necks and their eyes move. It's not just that they're dazed, its, they're trying to take in everything whereas the native New Yorker says 'I know what this is' and it's more selective. So you know there's the eye movement, there's the way the head is held, and the neck, and this whole question of of-you might say, the hips, And how much expressiveness is going to go into the hips, particularly for women. Some won't put much in and some, and some women will, like they'll wear high heels and they'll rock back and forth. So a lot of watching people walk has got this erotic component, you're watching with a sexual interest...Anyway there are very different styles, obviously a fat person is going to walk in a different way than a thin person. Someone who is carrying a little weight on them, I had a friend who is very heavy and she knew that it was putting pressure on her heart and she had to walk very slowly...So, I don't know, that's part of the answer

[I just mention, sometimes there's a gender element, I don't know observationally, maybe a little sexual energy and that comes out in flanerie and in the writing about flanerie. Does flanerie take place in the city still? If so, where]

Of course. You're always, so, one of the things I wrote in that piece in waterfront was you know you're looking for love and there's ... Walter Benjamin said 'love at last sight,' you meet and pass somebody who you think you could've spent the rest of your life with. Flanerie in the 19<sup>th</sup> century sense, probably has been modified. I noticed for instance recently that, this will sound like a terrible generalization, but the prettier a woman is the more she is apt to be on a cell phone.

[Interesting, ok, (laughs)]

And thought to myself, 'well why is this,' and it used to be that if you were a man who was heterosexual you would, part of the excitement and the adventure walking in the streets was that you could engage eye contact of pretty women and now this is much harder to do because they're either looking at their text messaging or they're looking at a phone as they are walking

along. and this offends me deeply because, I don't mind being rejected by someone beautiful, but I want at least the chance to look at them and for our eyes to meet. Then I thought recently, it's not just that that very pretty women are more popular and have more phone messages to answer it's that perhaps they don't like being the importune by every man that comes along, including you know middle aged men like me, and they're hiding behind these cell phones and text messages as a way for them not to have to deal with the amorous glances of everyone who passes their way. So that's a new wrinkle in flanerrie. The little electronic, the palm electronic device.

[The flaneur was primarily male...]

Yes, I don't know if you are aware of the piece by Vivian Gornet [?] published by Lane in NY. Which is about a woman walking in the street. And I think that in the 20<sup>th</sup> and certainly 21<sup>st</sup> century, certainly women have taken on the street and taken to the street more comfortably. There's an essay in art of the personal essay By Virginia Wolfe called "street haunting[?]" and then one by Vivian Gornet called From her book approaching eye level... in anthology writing in NY. It's all about being in the street and encountering different things and the question of loneliness and escaping loneliness by walking in the street. It's filled with the kinds of things you're looking for. It's called, "on the street, nobody watches, everybody performs"

So I do think it's been altered a little and there are flâneurs as well as flâneuses. In the 80's one of the feminist slogans was 'take back the street' and the idea that women had a right to walk in the street without being accosted and certainly without being raped or mugged. But in a way the real flâneuse already felt that the streets belonged to her and didn't feel she had to assert it as a political right. You have to feel in some ways the streets are not going to harm you in order to explore them. This comes down to something very basic which is the pro-urban or the anti-urban which is a part of the American character, so much of American mythology is wrapped up in the idea of the rural and there is so much hostility to the urban in American Mythology from Jefferson on. So those who feel comfortable in the streets, don't have to be talked into walking the in the streets. Some of this is, you know, for instances... Jews and Hispanics use, ... Jews have often been connected to the city life in America. When you see the way Hispanics use the streets and do street fairs and just take over, they feel that the streets are not only not hostile to them but something that is an extension of their living room. So some cultures are more comfortable in the street than others. And that even comes down to smells and issues of proximity and territoriality. There were studies done by Ed Batail [?] about how Arabs sometimes will come closer to you than WASPS will and this is considered a kind of warmth rather than a kind of invasion. Whereas WASPS, may feel that their space has been invaded their privacy has been invaded. So as well as gender there are issues of ethnicity and class. I was recently in Mexico in Monterey which is the second largest city and I was struck by the fact that there is a lot of culture complex public space, museums and things like that that tend to be kind of depopulated and, it seems it's very tasteful, but it's so different from the parts of the city that are teeming and the teeming parts tend to be working class with food fairs and things like that and smells and middle class, upper middle class person might feel intimidated and repelled by the amount of activity that a working class or lower class person would feel right at home with. So these issues of class and ethnicity enter in quite a lot into flâneury and very often a middle class person who is drawn into flâneury would be somebody who is drawn to working class environments, not exactly slumming, but something like, just liking the flow of life in those



places instead of finding them threatening. My wife doesn't like to be in crowds, and I like to be in crowds and these are very deep things in her case she may feel is something, being a woman and being shorter than I am makes her feel more capable of being trampled let's say. So these are, but some of it is also that she's from up-state NY and I'm from NYC. So these are all elements that factor in.

[Writing about walking... cuz flâneury became popular in writing and you've sort of continued that tradition writing about walking, What does writing do? Who's your intended audience? Who do you hope your writing reaches and what, do you hope for any effect from that?]

I'm primarily known as an essayist even though I write fiction, and the essay is a kind of walk a perambulation around a subject. So, you circle a subject, it's not a novel, it's not a book, so it's a kind of walk, you walk around, so I write to connect with others and to communicate what I can't communicate otherwise in daily conversation; a level of intimacy or confidingness that sometimes there isn't any option for in daily life. Montaigne said 'things that I wouldn't dare tell anybody in public anyone can go down to the bookstore and find out.' I feel the same way. I'm actually rather a selective and reserved person, but in my writing I can be more unbuttoned I can be more open. And I often feel that the writer is the person growing up in the family who was not the most theatrical but the one who is more the observer. The sibling who was a little less 'here I am, me' so it builds up the need to have one's say... it comes out in writing.

[Do you think literature has any ability to affect how people ...] [unclear]

I mean Wooden [?] once said that poetry didn't change anything. I think that of course literature has the ability to change people. It produces a lot of different models of behavior and in so doing, ideally increases our tolerance our sense that maybe there is another reason another way of looking at things. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century you have a lot of attempts to write from the point of view of a serial killer, someone who is mentally retarded, someone who is psychotic and so on, and to penetrate other states. So just in terms of the 'other,' and models of the 'other,' literature brings us closer to understanding people who would otherwise be [unclear?]. It's hard to feel that Iranians are a demonic group apart if you read a lot of Iranian literature, you can't help it. It lets you understand the family structure and things like that. So I think literature increases our capacity to absorb reality... for want of a better word, it increases our stoicism. That is, Chekov wrote about the way people were, not the way they should be, so when you read a Chekov play you think well, it's painful, but I'm increasing my capacity to absorb the bitter truth of the way people are. So that means that we are less likely to reject other people just because they're different from us. So I certainly feel that's one capacity of literature, the other capacity is to nurture our sense of beauty just as painting does or music does, an appreciation of form, an appreciation of an elegant language. I'm well aware that I'm a writer in a society that doesn't value literature that much. I take airplanes and I see that very few people are reading good books. Many of them are reading the equivalent of fan magazines [soap opera digest] beauty aids and so on... or watching dumb movies on their laptops. Very few are reading difficult works of literature or complex works of literature. If they are reading novels, they tend to be novels that go down easy like soft ice cream. So I know that I'm in a distinct minority. But I also am invited to go around the country and I realize that it is a tribe, maybe only 2000 readers in America, but there are those 2000.

[So you're reaching a select group of people, but do you think you're sort of preaching to the choir? Is there any other way... I imagine ...]

I don't think you can introduce poetry in ways, you know we have these national poetry months, you know I think there are limits to how much you can make people eat poetry like spinach. I think that there tend to be... in the past centuries very few people were educated. Now we have the ideal of universal education, but I think that the number of people who will respond for instance to literature remains small. And maybe there were more in the past before there were television or movies, but now people don't have to go to literature to get those sensations. So it's small. Sometimes I teach literature in a university. Some of my students don't have any idea that it's an artifact, that it has form and a kind of texture. It's as though they're looking at a painting and not seeing any brush strokes, just seeing the forms without any tactility involved. So, the same thing is true with writing. Some people get a shiver from a well turned sentence and some people aren't even aware that there is a pleasure to be had from that. They come to writing as if it were transparent. So I {sigh} I teach, so I teach not just the choir, I teach others, the unwilling or unwitting choir, but I'm always aware that some will get it and many won't. What astonishes me is that my work carries. That people identify with it. Even if it's not a million people who do, still that people again and again and say they can relate to what I'm writing. I think that part of what makes a writer is a kind of inbred sense that some experiences have a kind of [winsome? unclear] quality.

[I think walking is one of those things. It's ordinary but when you write about it or talk about it, it becomes poetic, or rhythmic as you mentioned... I'm going to shift gears a little. When you think about people who walk... I'm interested in city walkers, what would you imagine the values of people who choose to do that are?]

They understand the city environment much more. When you walk around you can't help but take in new buildings where old ones used to be. So you are much more in touch with your memory and the stages in your life. It's a kind of curious effect. You know, Coleson Whitehead said that, 'being a New Yorker is looking at something and realizing that something else used to be there...' You know you are a New Yorker when you have that sense of nostalgia and loss. So when I walk around and I think about how land use has changed, how the value of areas has changed so much. How areas that used to be ghettos or slums are now pricy and how a building that seemed to be a tenement is suddenly something valued. So there are lots of paradoxes and ironies in walking around. You can't help but be aware of that. Particularly in New York where real estate is the name of the game, it's essentially the industry that's driven the wealth of NY for awhile now. Walking around is the only way to appreciate that. It's funny because you are walking around and you see sometimes wonderful buildings and you feel, at least I feel, both drawn to them and resentful that I have to look at them. 'Oh gosh, something else to see. How long am I going to stand there,' it's like standing in front of a painting, am I going to give it ten minutes am I going to give it one minute, should I give it 5 seconds, have I got it yet? So certainly walking has an aesthetic dimension. It has this dimension of history, history is very important. The older I get the more I'm interested in history, and when I walk around NYC, I see ghosts of earlier places, earlier situations. So part of the reason why living in this city is a deep experience for me is because I bring to it a sense of history. A lot of that came from my reading.

When I did the anthology and waterfront. There were moments when I would be walking through the city and I would get a feeling of what it was like in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Edgar Allan Poe knew Nathaniel Parker Wallace or Whitman met [unclear] I saw that there were these connections. When Twain was living on west 10<sup>th</sup> street. So walking around, and some of it you know there are plaques that say that, 57<sup>th</sup> street windbeam howells... Willa Cather lived on Banks street... That's thrilling, but also you get this sense of accidental connections between people and you imagine that you that history is not just something in the abstract. That it is something real. Every time I walk across the Brooklyn bridge I think 'is NY capable of building something like that now?' and if not, why not. And there's a lot of talk starting to be about infrastructure and one of the ways of pumping life into the economy would be by having large public works infrastructure projects, which Obama would tend to be more interested in than John McCain. So, infrastructure, that's also part of the sense of history and the sense of depth, you walk across, you're walking the street and you know that underneath this NYC street there's steam pipes, telephone wires, and all the other kinds of electrical things, subways, there's a whole world underneath. So all of that, walking in the street brings you in touch with those currents. There's not just the attractive person you're looking at, there's also all this stuff. One of the paradoxes that I always wonder in NY when Conn Edison digs up the street, why can't they also notify the gas company or the dept of transportation so they could all do it ...instead of doing it a new time every time. Anyway, all those invisible processes are revealed when there's an open cut in the street. So, there's so much, for me there's being in touch with the various stages of my life.

[I was just thinking, oftentimes when they dig like that, it exposes different kinds of history] You know you go down and you discover that there were cobble stones and flag stones and things like that, that the sidewalk has actually been at different levels. [I was fascinated by that when I was in Seattle a couple of years ago because, the city that is there now was built on top of the original city, so you can go underneath and see some of the original buildings that were in Seattle]

Building a city is just an extraordinary feat and as soon as you begin not to take it for granted, you're in awe. It's amazing, and since I don't think of it as a violation of nature, since I think human beings have a right to live as much as animals, I think that it's amazing that we built these cities. To me it's still the greatest achievement of humankind.

[Have you walked in other cities to compare to...]

Yes, many many

[Any that compare to walking in NY?]

There are great walking cities, like Buenos Aires is a great walking city. I've walked in Rome, in Jerusalem, in London, in Paris. Paris is an amazing walking city and it's just the right size. You know, there are some good walking cities in America, Philadelphia, San Francisco, but they tend to give out. Last weekend I was in Los Angeles and I always try to Los Angeles a try and to pretend that I like it, but if I'm just dropped in for a few days it does bother me that it's all freeways.

[It is, I lived in San Diego for a long time, and it's all like that]. It's disturbing. If push comes to shove I have to admit that it bothers me. I don't really feel comfortable there.

[A few things I wanted to come back to... You mentioned the paradox of walking... How do you reconcile the notion... NYC is certainly a buzz with activity, and I would say pressure... how does walking...it seems sort of antithetical in the sense that it's slower, but yet so many more people do it here. I think it's 5.6% of people walk to work here. How does that dialectic fit together, because they obviously do here].

Well, I don't think that there's any contradiction. I think the rhythm of NY is a walking rhythm, a purposeful rhythm, not a slow rhythm. I think that when you walk in the streets you filter out, you filter in danger, you see something is coming at you. This is why it's so irritating that people now walk along looking at their palms. When I see people step off the sidewalk into the street and they are text messaging I think 'my god, that is really crazy.' Not only could they get killed, but I resent that they are walking right into my path it's very solipsistic. So, the rhythm of NY is very geared towards walking you know, you can basically do a block a minute, and a few miles an hour, so it's a way of just checking in on your fellow man [?].

[History, writing about walking has been happening for centuries, my interest is in 19<sup>th</sup> century writing, Balzac, Paris... What can we learn from that time and bring to the present in terms of daily living, lessons to be learned that apply to walking or include walking].

Well, of course, a lot of what you are talking about is Paris. Paris is a gorgeous city and it takes you over a river, back and forth, and through historical sites. I'm sort of nervous about the idea that walking will become a kind of [unclear-specidgious?] hygienic activity that people don't necessarily want to be doing but that's good for you. I said that in the end of that essay... I've been in Italian cities where they establish these pedestrian zones and it's very nice to walk around these old buildings but you know right at the edge are these parking lots and it's almost like saying 'we allow you to walk around, but it's not taken seriously it's not really life, it's a mausoleum.' So I've come to the reluctant conclusion that pedestrian zones are a bad idea and that you should have cars driving from the street to give it life. You can't just create these zones. You need pedestrian areas, but the idea of banning cars doesn't seem to be a good idea.

So, what other lessons to be taken from Paris? Don't forget you have a whole-Paris was going through a lot of transitions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Of course with Haussman you have the wrecking of the old neighborhoods and the boulevards. And all the arcades that Benjamin talks about. There were new forms and people were exploring them. With shopping with consumption... [leisure] like for instance, something that I find troubling is the scale of contemporary built environments, in other words, buildings tend to be much bigger and you get something like the Time/Warner/AOL building on Columbus circle, is essentially a block-long building, and you used to have in a single new York block you used to have 20 buildings, even if they were sky scrapers. So if you have a big plot, or if you do a kind of complex like even the south street sea port which is essentially adapted for use. The price of things means that they can only take franchises as tenants. So that means that all of these developments are going to have the same Gap store, the same Ann Taylor store, the same...Maybe even Barnes & Nobles, they're going to

have the same. So it means that retail is going to get more homogenized because the owner wants to sign a long lease and only the franchises have the deep pockets to sign that lease. So that's a worrying trend of homogenization. People have talked for a long time about the suburbanization of NY, the malling of NY, but I think that it's a lot to do with this issue of construction. Because companies now want very large, unbroken floor plans, so that means that they want block long buildings. So that does something to retail, even if they allow retail at the street level. So one lesson I would like to hold on to is the lesson of variety at the street level. Like the point I made in Waterfront, the only players in waterfronts around the world tend to be very large corporations and they put in very large retail, so what you don't get is the one after another shop that will create the impression of life. So all that sense of vitality has to be protected.

[That makes sense to me, because walking in Paris, I spent 3 months there last year working on that essay, and I did a lot of walking in Paris and that is very much still the case. It's very much like the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They haven't changed a lot. Streets, storefronts, variety and size. It's very local too.]

[story about a favorite walk...]

I like to walk in this neighborhood. If I walk in this direction east, I come to the Kiwanis [?] canal which is this little funky waterway. If I walk west, I come to the east river and remnants of the shipping industry and they still have some port activity there and ... and you get a sense as you get closer to the river you cross over the Brooklyn Queens expressway and you enter an area that I think of as the land that time forgot. It just feels more cut off, quieter. It's funny, there's a kind of Chinese slaughterhouse there, chicken slaughterhouse. There were lots of objections like, you know, the children will be disturbed, as though chickens are born in saran wrap... There were even objections to this coffee roasting place you would think that people would like the smell of roasting coffee. This is part of the tension that occurs when industrial areas become residential areas. People come with a whole different set of expectations. I'm right there with Jane Jacobs, believing in mixed usage, mixed usage is a very good idea and the industrial is very important especially small industrial. So I like walking in that direction toward the river and feeling the pulse slow a little bit and something very funky about it. And I like anyway walking around Brooklyn. I asked my publisher if I could do it about Brooklyn instead of Manhattan, he said no way cause it's not world famous, but there is something about the life in Brooklyn that I love. The clouds, the sky seems closer to you somehow, there isn't as much high rise construction. People don't get quite as dressed up in Brooklyn as they do in Manhattan, you can go out in your pajamas and pick up the paper. So there's something a little bit more casual and funky about it that's part of what I look for when I'm walking around.

[Anything you want to tell me that I haven't asked about...that you think is particularly important to know about walking?]

Well, you know that it's considered one of the healthiest things that people can do. So on a physiological level it engages a lot of muscles. But it's something that non-athletic types like myself can do without feeling like we're taking castor oil. It's very mental in a way. It allows you, if you are cerebral or locked in your head, to continue to do so in an understood manner at the same time as to take in the consolations of the real world. [that's one of the things I worry

about too as walking becomes associated with health and well being and it's losing some of its romantic and aesthetic qualities...In my field there's the prescription of walking steps a day] or the power walkers... There's a book by Charles Resnikov called the manner music, and it just consist of walks between the narrator and his friend. These are people who are the least athletic people imaginable and they keep breaking up by going into a cafeteria and having apple strudel or something. And you realize how in the 1920s and 30s walking was not seen as a basically healthy activity, it was seen as almost a kind of nerdy activity. That the person of sensitivity could undertake. Henry Miller writes a lot about walks, gigantic long walks. So this is a way for people who are not particularly athletic, who you might say are prisoners of their mind to make peace with themselves. An intellectual activity.

## APPENDIX J: INTERVIEW-LS100018-LEO

[What brought you to walking?]

In New York going back hundreds of years that this was some sort of art form, some sort of form of recreation. I just did it because I liked doing it, but suddenly this linkage... when there was the article in the ny times a few years back and to see that there were other people doing it and that there were just all these sort of connections ... between people and between what we do in literature, it was just fascinating. [that's what fascinates me about it too, is that literature, in so many ways is a reflection of {couldn't hear} yet it's also {couldn't hear} it might reflect what we see, but we are also viewing it through someone else {?} ??? The article... I found the article and just if you would... how did you come to this?] In some regards it was by necessity. When I think back to when I was in HS even before as a small child and this steps out of the necessity realm for a moment, but, My parents encouraged us in so many ways, and I'm very thankful to them, my mother especially for encouraging interests in the world around us, history and nature and the [built?] environment, the natural environment . We would go as a family, and I grew up in Nyack {?} New York which is just north of the city about 20 miles, the next the bridge after the bridge into the city is the Tapanzee that's where I grew up. My parents would take us to different parks, historic sites, and just interesting places just a kind of thing to do as a family on a Saturday afternoon, all seasons, it could be much colder than this and we would still go to our favorite parks or playgrounds, historic sites, and we would go for these walks, it was just part of it and I never would have realized that I was doing something that was part of something bigger, it was just there was a lake in this state park, and the thing to is to walk around it. As I got older of course we made our way all the way around it and there was a nature trail on the far side and there were some historic interpretive signs and at one point to describe the {?} industry that had flourished there and it was just part of what we did was to do these long walks and then as I got older, and got to my HS, I continued to do those types of things even though it was sort of uncool cause I was a teenager and my parents were [aliens?] at that point. But to get from where my HS was situated in our town into the downtown area you had to walk, it was probably less than a 10 minute walk, but there were all these streets you could go on cause it was a grid, just like here in NY. And I would take different routes you could go to the parks that were down by the river and I would meet my friends and we'd walk to so-and-so's house and go here and there and then go back to school and then got on the bus and went home. It was just part of what we did and, maybe it's because few of us had cars, I mean my older brother had a car, but most people didn't we didn't drive all that much, so I would do these walks and it was really not outside the realm of reality for us, for my friends and I to say let's just walk all the way up to the park over here or go this way or go that way. So it stayed as a part of my life. And then, I went to college up in Plattsville, NY which is a cold, cold place, and I would go another 60 miles up the road was Montreal which is a wonderful city. It's a perfect kind of city like NY for just simply plunking yourself down somewhere and then just walking. And so this continued. I certainly got on the metro in Montreal my fair share, but it was just, the act of walking was part of the experience, because it was from my own two feet that I had the best view of what the different sites were and this continued any place I went. I spend a semester in London, England. I spent a semester in Ottawa, Ontario and both cities were just so beautiful, I don't know if you've ever been to Ottawa, it's just an amazing city with this lovely canal that sort of flows through the middle of it you can ice skate on it in the winter. But you could get from place to place on foot and really see

what was going on. It's kind of on walks above this river and it's just spectacular. And, London is London. So I just continued with walking as an activity. I certainly would jump on and off public transit from time to time, to get places and honestly my favorite mode of transport was always the bus because I felt like the bus was like walking but if I were too tired. Because, underground, you're underground you're in a tunnel, but on the bus you still got to see things and I would make notes of places that I wanted to come back to. And I'll never forget when NYC finally instituted free transfers between the bus and the Subway. It wasn't always like this where you'd come up out of the subway and your card would get you free transfer onto the next bus. It wasn't always like that, when I first got here it was literally a separate fare if you wanted to jump on the bus. They thought they'd lose so much money when they made these free transfers as part of their fare structure and all the sudden their ridership just skyrocketed because more people were using public transit.

So, Finally I arrived in NYC which is almost 20 years ago and walking again, it was almost out of necessity in some ways. I mean, the subway was cheap back then, less than 2\$, but again, it was simply getting from place to place I knew I would see more, I would experience more, I would enjoy more if I used my own two feet. And it was a point in time where I didn't watch what I eat which I do almost religiously now, but I would stop at almost every pizza place on the way or make a note to come back and I felt like I had had a slice of pizza at almost every pizza joint in NY at one point and it showed too. So it started out in some respects born of necessity, but I enjoyed it so much that it became part of the heart of the whole experience and that's why, when I met my wife, it became one of our activities too is to just pick someplace where we were going to meet or to go together and then from there it was a leisurely stroll or a brisk walk and we would go through neighborhood after neighborhood or even just within a certain neighborhood or section of the city and it was how we got to know certain areas. There was a certain point in my life, we lived here in Manhattan, and I felt like I had an almost photographic recognition of every intersection in the city or maybe I couldn't recall it perfectly like a photograph in my mind, but I knew where that was and I'd been there. Of course there were limitations, maybe that was south of 96<sup>th</sup> street or South of 125<sup>th</sup> street ... I loved it when we finally bought an apartment and we moved all the way up to Washington Heights which was up near the George Washington Bridge. Suddenly my knowledge and experience of the city sort of extended another hundred blocks. I loved that. So, walking has just always been this wonderful experience for me, a way to get from place to place, but a way to really kind of enjoy the ride.

[Where do you typically walk and photograph?] Since my knee operation I have tried to take it easy, but I have been going farther and farther afield. For the longest time the most typical walk and the photograph in the Times, that picture is from here which is 34<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> {?} down to 14<sup>th</sup> street and 8<sup>th</sup> {?} avenue. With some variation, it might be over an avenue or two or down one avenue and back up another. I'd say that at this point that's probably the most familiar walk I have is from 34<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> and back. Sometime in the middle of the day I went to Columbus Circle I had Christmas shopping I've been trying to cover a lot of territory. I have a lot of stores to go to and a lot of errands to run that sort of thing so I've been all over the place. Today for lunch I went to 57<sup>th</sup> and Park avenue. A fair distance! I took the subway back. [Yeah, I've walked I'm staying at the youth hostel at 103 to batter park, so...] That's the thing, it's good times{?} [So, what catches your eye when you walk?] I'd say, there are times when it is simply, if it's a very familiar walk such as from here to 14<sup>th</sup> and back, it's probably people, in some ways most



of all because I feel like I know each block and the shops that are there well enough that kinda I don't think twice about them. It's more the people that I see. It's things like one street south of here that's closed off because there's a public school on that block and they close it off at lunch time so the kids have this entire city block from 8<sup>th</sup> avenue to 9<sup>th</sup> avenue to just kind of hang out on and they're scattered all over the street. So it's things like that. I think beyond people, it is the shops, a lot of it is olfactory, it's the scents. It's like, I know when I'm walking past this one sandwich shop-I think they must put their sandwiches under the broiler because it always smells like toast when you walk by. There are flower shops, if you go on, sort of southeast of here if you go into what's, it's kind of receding now but, it's this sort of this flower district there are a lot of plant shops and this kind of thing along the street. And It's not just flowers it's all sorts of plants so you get this big, sort of, wave of scents coming at you from all directions and I love that I love that you can still see this on the streets because, there used to be a fish market in Manhattan, the Fulton Fish market and that was moved up to the Bronx into a modern sanitary facility and this kind of thing, but I remember going there with my folks and even after I'd moved here and when it was here in Manhattan and the smell, the overwhelming smell of fish of all things, fish can actually hit you like a brick in the summertime especially. So it's the things I can smell, it's the people that I see. If I have company, it's the conversation. I notice my pace, I try to adjust it for whomever I'm with because sometimes I feel, if given the choice or the chance, I will walk way faster than most people. Because I do it for exercise as well, it's a part of the experiences. I notice things like, I'm an urban planner, so I notice things like buildings that are, when there is a new shop where it had been vacant for awhile or there's an old building coming down which unfortunately happens quite a bit in NY. So I always have an eye out on development. There is a huge infrastructure project here in the city they've been building it for 25 years, a series of water tunnels that distribute water throughout the city. But they are the kind of tunnel you could drive a city bus through. Every once in a while the city has to poke a vertical shaft up from these water tunnels which are buried way under the earth, but they have to bring these vertical shafts up in different places so you'll turn the corner and then there will be a big sign that says 'third water tunnel project' with all sorts of emergency phone numbers in case of an accident, but you never know where you're going to find one of those vertical shafts coming up. I used to work for the agency that is building this, it's the city's office of environmental protection, so it's kind of a funny sort of urban scavenger hunt that I do in the back of my head. You turn the corner and suddenly 'oh there's the water tunnel' you can't actually see the tunnel because it's all fenced off, but just knowing that they're in there. They've been building this thing for 25 years and I don't think it's going to be complete for another 10 or 15, so it's just one of those mammoth projects. So I look for things like that and evidence of, also working for the {dormitory ?} authority, we have projects all over the city. Anywhere I turn I will see a project, I drive past and say 'hey there's a project,' it may not be one of mine personally, but someone else who's working on it. So it's things like that. It's almost like I play, almost like a scavenger hunt or just some sort of a little game-it's almost like a big monopoly game in some ways, like 'find these things' and I make mental notes to them and add to the experience. When I, I guess, discovered this as a career, I was an undergraduate and wound up taking an elective class in the geometry department in urban planning kind of an introduction. And I recall getting the syllabus and I remember reading it and there's books to buy and required readings for the next week's class. I bought those books and I started reading them. In the first two weeks of class I had read each of the text books, cover to cover, I had devoured them. It explained to me so much of what I had been looking at, what I had been observing for years, since I was a kid. Understanding why

things were built the way they are, why were things built in the first place? Why was this stand of trees in our town suddenly knocked down and there was a subdivision. Why were these things occurring and what were the factors and forces that shaped them. It was like a revelation and I almost knew instantly that this is what I wanted to do when I grew up. And the professor and other professors at Plattsburg who helped to kind of point me in the right direction. So, I'm someone who observes the world around them to such a degree that, and walking has really become part of that, as one more way to experience the world around me. When I fly on an airplane I can't fall asleep the way most people can because I'm too busy trying to catch a glimpse of the earth below because I want to see, 'is it farms?' 'Is it a city? What city is that?' I'll play these guessing games with my wife if she is sitting next to me and I'll ask 'what city is that, that we can see and I'm just keenly interested in the world around me and so walking has just become part of how I experience it.

[In terms of the experience and what catches your eye or what you notice... what do you notice about yourself when you walk like that?] I think for starters, I feel like it makes me feel as if I'm part of the city or wherever I am, if I'm in the woods or a small town, it makes me feel much more a part of the place where I am. And, especially NY, because four or five years ago we moved out of the city and so we moved out to Long Island to a wonderful town that is very walkable and that I love to walk in, but we miss the city. It's where my wife and I met and we have so many great experiences in the 15 years we lived here. 15 years includes time when we didn't know each other, but we were both here for the same time. And so we miss it, we miss that leisure. Of course we miss the leisure of not having kids when it was just the two of us and we did whatever we wanted. So being in the city every day, working here. this is to me in so many ways, just the place I work. A lot of people think, including my wife, think 'it's so great to work in the city,' but the truth is that it's just like any other place where you work. I kind of come in and then I leave, and the way that I enhance that and recall what it was like to live here is through my walking. So in some ways, there is just that connection between me and the ground I'm walking and the pavement I'm walking on I still feel part of the city. I think, it's probably true in most in any city, there is a certain cache to living in the city, I mean we have, and the suburbs are often maligned as being places that are sterile without culture, without this, without that and, of course that's not really true I'd be happy to show anyone the world class art museum that's in our town and the gourmet food markets that are everywhere these days. But it's not NYC. And so in some ways I kind of maintain that connection through working here, through my walks, through being really knowledgeable about the city. I can meet someone who lives in the city and eventually they get around to asking me where I live and they're surprised to hear that I don't live in the city anymore because I'm still so aware of what is going on. But part of that is also what I do for a living and my interests in the city. If there's something that goes on in the city, I'm well aware of it just because of my connection to this agency, our state government, the other levels of government, other things that are going on. But there's just that sort of cache that's missing when you live in the suburbs and I feel like I can maintain that because I'm an urban sort of person through my walks. I kind of notice things around me and I like being up on things. And part of my profession is, you know what's being built, you know what's being torn down, you know what's happening in that sort of development realm, which is very important. Whether it's what's being built down at the World Trade Center site or what have you or what's to happen with the whole Westside Railroad Yards which is a big development parcel that's to be built upon at some point. I know what's going on in the city and

if I really wanna really see those railroad yards I just walk to them you know and I take a look or I go to ground zero and I look. So it's just part me and experiencing the city and I think it makes me feel good about myself. I don't spend my life behind the tinted windows of an SUV getting from place to place. My feet are actually on the ground and I think that that enhances my connection to the world around me and makes me feel better about myself. I think that's what I notice about myself.

[What kind of values are there in that?] I think in some regards it has to do with things like self-confidence, being, I enjoy being knowledgeable about the city or about any place. I've been places, visited cities and towns and what have you and impressed people who live there with my knowledge of where I am. Why? Because I looked at a map before I went. I read, even the most cursory of materials- on the internet or a book or what have you. But, I actually did my homework before I went. I'm not a know it all, I'm not a show off, I'm not trying to impress anybody with how much I know, what statistics I can spew out, important dates, it's more for my own, I like knowing about a place, I feel like I'm always learning about things. So, it has to do with self-confidence and self-awareness, and satisfying myself that there is always something to learn and I always like to be the one who is learning it. We went to Sicily years ago, in 2000, and before we left I read a novel, a memoir of an American woman who had moved to Sicily and lived there. And I read this book before we went to Sicily, just to give myself this kind of a background understanding of where we were going. That's really typical of the type of thing that I would engage in. It just makes me feel connected, confident, and knowledgeable and these things are important to me. [I remember, I spent several months in Paris when I was working on my translation. One thing that I found very complimentary is when someone would stop me and ask for directions [laughing together]] That's great, sure [I think it's a very similar thing to what you're talking about and I felt even better when I could actually tell them how to get somewhere, in French] Very true, very true. [So, I know what you mean, it's very satisfying].

[What do you notice about other people's walks? Do you ever notice how people walk...] I think, in some ways, I don't think people notice what's going on around them as much as I do when they're walking. I think it's more, they're trying to get somewhere, maybe not walking very fast, but they're trying to get somewhere and that's really all that counts. It's kind of humorous, in NY there's a saying that you can always tell a tourist because they're the ones looking up. The truth is they're the smart ones, because they're maybe marveling at a building that I'm, like the Empire State Building or something, which is perhaps the most famous building in NY. But, the fact that they are actually looking up and noticing, is, sort of puts them head and shoulders above the rest of us who are just sort of looking at the pavement or looking straight ahead. There's so much to see. I was reminded of this recently, there's a regular column in the real estate section of the Sunday NY times, where they say, if you are thinking of living in the area... and they sort of profile that area. They recently picked, just east of here is a neighborhood that is known alternately as 'Little Seoul' or 'Korea Town,' it's a collection of businesses and hotels and restaurants that cater to the Korean community here in NY. I never really thought of it as an actual distinctive neighborhood although when you walk down that street there're lots of restaurants and shops and everybody is speaking Korean. Well, they had a few pictures of some of the interesting buildings in this article and there was this building that I had never seen before, it's two blocks away from here, and I'd never seen this building that was built in the 1890s as a residence for bachelors. It's only four or five stories, but they're all studio

apartments and they are of course selling for way too much money now, but. And it was red brick building and I just thought 'I've never seen that before.' I've yet to get out there and look for it, but it's that kind of thing that I feel like other people are missing it's looking up and seeing what little gems can be found. There's only one Empire State Building, but there's lots of other interesting buildings in between. So, I'm often, I try to stop and look at buildings when I can to try and notice, to try and understand a little bit more. Because it's often you'll see a building like that which is 4 or 5 stories next to a building which is 35 stories which was built just a few years ago and so you get to see these sort of juxtaposition of architectural styles of different periods of development and what have you and that's how you learn about the places around you. I think that a lot of people don't really notice and it's ironic in some ways that it's the tourists who are kind of pointing us in the right direction for learning.

[I often look up, and part of it [why we miss things?] I think is because it's not natural a natural thing to do, it really isn't. And there is so much in just the facades of buildings, so much decorative architecture and... [unclear] the moment] That's very true. I'm trying to do that more back in Huntington where I live because it's an old town, it's been there for a long time and yet, you know the shops at the ground level seem more modern, but it's when you look up to the second and third stories and you see the date and it's 1899 and you see the name of the business that built it, but now it's a Starbucks. And as things develop, there's finally a new residential building there on the main street and one of the things I'd like to see happen is more housing that is in that downtown compact area. We live about a ten minute walk outside of that and I just wanna see, I'm interested in seeing our town prosper because I don't want bad things to happen so... and there's a few vacant store fronts but I think it's more the economy and at this point in time you're starting to see that everywhere. Just walked past a restaurant that I'd been to a couple of times before on my Big walk on Madison Avenue and I was sad to say that it's closed. It was a French restaurant, Chez Laurence {?} It was like a little café, but you know, quiche and a salad or soup and salad and it was just the perfect place, and it's gone.

[I think we'll see a lot of that in this day. It is sad... I find it interesting that you take the time to walk, and there are others obviously that do as well. I juxtapose that to this notion of this city, NYC in particular, it being a very hustling, bustling, fast paced, get things done sort of way. And in some ways I think walking is antithetical to that, because it takes time] Yes

[How do you reconcile that in this city?] Well there are times when I walk very fast to get to where I am going, sometimes it's very utilitarian, sometimes it's a functional act. I lost a considerable amount of weight several years ago, for health reasons. So, one of the reasons why I love walking, why I've sustained my walking –it's a great activity physically. So there are times when I am walking and it's just down and back-down 14<sup>th</sup> street and back up, simply because I really need to do it, you know, it's Wednesday and I haven't yet done it and I wanna do it at least two or three times a week. So my I just gotta go out and do it, so my quickest route, down 8<sup>th</sup> avenue and back. So there are times when it is just a quick activity with little time to stop and smell the roses so to speak and that's it. And there are other times when it's more leisurely-like this walk [pictured?], I was with a friend and It was just, we weren't in any hurry because we knew had plenty of time, we'd given ourselves quite a lot of time to get to that corner. So, I went one way and she went the other right at the end and we had enough time to get where we were going and that was it. and we passed things along the way and commented on them and talked

about them. Whereas it's [other times/kinds of walks] this hysterical dance in some ways, you're walking along and people are coming front and back. It's funny, I feel like in all the years I've lived here and worked here, I've really only bumped full on into someone, maybe a small handful of times. The rest of the time it's like you keep passing within like a half an inch everyone sort of adjusts their pace like at the last second or what have you. And you just seem to miss each other and you just keep going on your way. In some ways you feel like this whole world is swirling around you, but you're the one having this leisurely walk and enjoying getting there. I guess there are just times when you have that leisure to enjoy a slow walk and there are times when it just has to be a functional or utilitarian walk. Christmas shopping in the last couple of weeks, I've had to just make a beeline. Yesterday I walked from Columbus Circle to what is known as Grand Army Plaza, but no one ever calls it that it's right in front of you know, the Plaza hotel. You know where the Plaza Hotel is in that Southeast corner of Central Park and there's a big statue there, that's called the Grand Army Plaza, but no one would refer to it as that. I was going to basically 60<sup>th</sup> street and Madison to a store called Barney's, a big fancy department store. That's the south end of Central Park, it's a lovely walk, it's this wonderful break between the sort of scenic quality of Central Park which is, at that point, Central Park is sort of sunken down, you go over the retaining wall and it's sort of sunken down and it's these lakes and whatever and it's very woodsy. But right there at 59<sup>th</sup> street it's just this wall of buildings, beautiful buildings residential buildings and hotels. And I walked through there so fast, this is from 8<sup>th</sup> avenue to 5<sup>th</sup> avenue so it's three big city blocks east west, I walked through there like it was the Indy 500, my legs were going and going and going, I was weaving in and out and passing people and whatever. So here I am in one of the most beautiful places in NY, and I just wasn't even noticing because I had to get from the shops on Columbus Circle to a shop on the east side and then get back here. Cuz I'm still trying to get my work done. So here I am in this beautiful place in the city, but I still had to just kind of focus in on the task at hand which was do these Christmas errands. So, there are times, regardless of the setting, I have to kind of ignore it and just keep right on going. So, that's, I think what you have to do, unfortunately, is sometimes you're just part of that hustle and bustle, just getting from place to place and just getting things done. But, I think that NY, in some ways, that image of NY as the city that never sleeps which is true, but, just the city that everyone is always running to and fro, in so many ways, the real delights and pleasures of NY come when you slow down and you stop. The truth is, a really slow walk is the best thing. I mean maybe even just sitting somewhere watching the world go by is wonderful. And that's why there are so many great public spaces in NY to do that.

[There really are, I'm fascinated with the pedestrian islands] Along Broadway? Sure [A little scary, when I first saw them, I thought 'wow who would sit there?' but, they do] It's amazing that our Mayor has really done a lot in his two terms to sort of enhance that kind of experience. For years, pedestrian advocates have fought to change the signals, the walking signals and the traffic signals so that people actually have kind of have a head start. Now they finally have done that, I mean, after years of fighting now in most intersections. It actually seems to say, everybody it will be four-way red and it will say 'walk' so you can walk, and then it turns green for the cars. It actually favors the pedestrians and there are more bike lanes in the city. Mayor Bloomberg has really listened to these advocates and people who are trying to make the city safer for bikers and pedestrians. It has made it a nicer city.

[An interesting statistic I read to prepare for this, that I think is from the Dept of Transportation, that of all the major cities in the US, NY has the most walkers to work-something like 5.7% [faded out]. Are they like-minded individuals like you or is it something about NYC?] It's interesting to consider your question because I sometimes think that that might be out of necessity. When I think back, when Dominique and I first got married, we lived in a little apartment on 65<sup>th</sup> street between 1<sup>st</sup> and York Av. I worked at 40<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> and she worked at Rockefeller Center. We both walked to work each day because for both of us it was 15 or 20 blocks down and then a few blocks over. To get to the subway would've meant going North and then going west to the Hunter College stop, it's 60<sup>th</sup> and Lexington, the most crowded subway line in the city, which would then –you literally sardine yourself into the subway like this [demo] for two or three stops and then get out. I clocked it when we first got married and I realized it takes me forty minutes to do the subway and 45 minutes to walk. So, for the five extra minutes, so I bought myself a little umbrella to keep inside my book-bag and I was set. It just was the better choice rather than forcing ourselves into this subway situation. My only regret from that era was that our hours were different, so I would leave before she did. My wife is more of the 10-6 kind of thing and I'm more the 8-5 or 8-6. I think that a lot of people realize in the city, and I can't say that this is anything more than anecdotal [that's fine, I just want your ideas] that walking is the way to go. It's just a more, better for them health-wise and just a better way to go for getting to work rather than going out of your way to get onto public transit or hopping in a taxi or what have. I think it's born of necessity for most people. So, that would be my view.

[Someone else had said to me too, especially if you have to go across, the buses are, getting across Manhattan is just harder to do]. East-West is really difficult, there are only 3 subway lines that go east-west. And because Manhattan is relatively skinny east-west, those lines only go east-west for a few blocks and then they stop. I mean, the no 7 train keeps going to Queens, the Times Square shuttle just goes the few blocks, the El train at 14<sup>th</sup> street starts at 8<sup>th</sup> avenue and goes all the way into Brooklyn, but it doesn't cover too much territory. And, the buses are the worst east-west, they crawl. The one on 34<sup>th</sup> street here, I laugh when I see people queuing up for it because I know I can out walk that bus. The traffic is just murder going east-west on major avenues. So I think, east-west trips are always, always walking trips. And often, you will walk ... the Subway lines run mainly north-south, so depending on what your ultimate journey is, you might actually walk pretty far east-west to grab that north-south subway train to get to where you're going. So if I'm going to the upper east-side from here, for instance, when I was still wearing a leg brace and before surgery and whatever, I would hobble over to the 33<sup>rd</sup> street station on the Lexington Av line to go up to 77<sup>th</sup> street to Lennox Hill hospital where my doctor is. I would be really tired after that too because from here to Lexington av-I don't think of it as really far, but when you've got a bum knee, it's pretty far. So it depends, you'll take those east-west walks to get a north-south subway line depending on what your final destination is.

[When you're out there walking, have you had any opinions about gender differences or... especially I'm thinking of the kind of walking you do, the sort of, longer distance, or even just in general ...Any kind of issues related to gender?] I think it's kind of hard to tell who is walking for leisure and who is walking for functional reasons, to get where they are going with no regard for the scenery or the activity. I think walking is one of those things that people don't actually think of it as an activity in and of itself. It's like people have a hard time thinking of a bicycle could actually be a way of commuting. Like 'a bicycle is something you ride when you are a

child, not a way to get from home to work and back.’ That’s what I’m saying about walking and seeing it as an actual activity, they just think ‘I walk because I have to.’ In terms of gender, I don’t think I’ve ever noticed any sort of swing in one direction or another in terms of people walking for pleasure, although you know when I think about it, I often feel like I see couples enjoying the walk, seem to sort of be more enjoying the walk in and of itself. But that’s just a very limited observation, I can’t say that I’ve made, it’s not a scientific observation.

[Interesting thought, I think that a lot of misguided opinions about NYC is that it’s a dangerous place. In fact the last time I was here I called my mother, I was at Morningside park, and she said ‘is it safe there?’ ‘And I was like, yeah, Mother, I’m fine.’ So that raises my questions about gender. Sometimes it’s a little bit less... In other big cities it’s less likely that women will walk alone, not sure about couples, because of perceptions of safety.] That’s true, but I do feel that the city has become a much safer place in the 20 years since I first moved here. It’s really, you certainly still should not walk alone at night, but that’s true-it doesn’t matter if you are a woman or a man. You should certainly keep your wits about you as it gets later at night. I’ve gone on some big long walks at night and on some occasions, when I lived on the upper-west-side, when I was a bachelor, and friends of mine lived in Greenwich Village-there were just times when it was midnight and it seemed like the best thing to do was to walk all the way home and I walked all the way from Waverly Village to 83<sup>rd</sup> and Columbus where I lived late at night, because I needed the exercise and I needed something to push the alcohol through my system seriously. I don’t know if, I can’t recall if on nights when I would just walk home versus nights when I took the subway, if I woke up the next morning thinking, ‘which was better.’ I do remember thinking, ‘I really need fresh air, I need to walk.’

[I’ve done that too, there’s something nice about the night too, the quiet. One of my favorite times... I used to do a lot of crisis work. This is kind of an aside from walking, but. At 4 o’clock in the morning, I figured, the criminals had gone to bed and no one is up yet, it’s such a peaceful...] It’s funny that you said that. My younger brother spent many years as a police officer here in NY and for the longest time, he worked the Midnight shift from Midnight to 7am and everyone would ask him-‘isn’t it so dangerous?’ and he said ‘no actually it’s really quiet after a certain point, because’ he said ‘even the bad guys have to go to sleep.’ So maybe from like midnight until like two or three there were things going on, but after that it really quieted down because even the bad guys have to go to sleep.

[I wanna go back to your interview for the Times. When you decided to do that, were you approached by someone?] Alex Marshall is part of an organization called Regional Plan Association and he’s the editor, and he writes and edits for them and it’s a sort of Urban Planning organization. He sends out every week or so a newsletter called “spotlight on the region” and it is one of many very interesting email newsletters that I get on this and related topics and there was this one blurb in there that Alex wrote, just a very brief article-2 or 3 paragraphs long, that was about what he referred to as ‘long walkers’ or ‘long walking’ about this sort of trend that he had noticed in the city that people were going for really long walks. I responded, he wasn’t asking for comments, but just being interested in what he had written, I shot him an email that said ‘I’ve been walking for many years, it’s something that interests me and this is what I do,’ and he wrote back to me and said ‘I’m thinking about expanding this for an article in the NYTimes, would you be interested in being interviewed?’ and I said ‘certainly.’

He and I never met, he sent me an email with a list of questions and I just responded. He said 'you're going to be called by a photographer who's going to come and take your picture.' Nothing would've prepared me for this experience, I get a phone call from the photography editor of the Times, I think there are several, but this woman called me up and scheduled a time when I was to meet this photographer. He accompanied me on my walk all the way from 34<sup>th</sup> street to 14<sup>th</sup> street and back. I was walking, he was taking my picture from every angle, he would run ahead, it was hysterical. People were looking at me wondering who the heck I was and I'm just dressed you know the way that I am. I didn't look like anyone famous and that was it. It was funny because Alex interviewed me by email and then the photographer came and then, I am not kidding, it must have been 7 or 8 months before the article appeared in the Times. I am sure there are all kinds of reasons why that kind of thing happens, you know, things get bumped and what have you, but all the sudden it is just there. And it was terrific, I got calls and emails from people and I enjoyed my several moments of fame. The funny thing is that it happened, within a few months of the article appearing, for a project here at my job, I was actually on local television news here in NY and then again out on Staten Island for a local television station out there. So, I was in the NY Times and then on TV all within the span of a few months and I think that may have been my 15 minutes of fame, which is good. I think that was it. It was a very interesting fall.

[Follow up question-what does writing about walking do, publishing something? And what audience does that attract?] When I read the in the Times, which you may recall there was a main article and, the main body of the article by Alex and then there were three or four sort of profiles of people and I was one of them. So, writing about walking, reading this article about walking, in which I was a part of the article, sort of made me realize there this connection to something that's sort of larger and that this is something that has been going on and is sort of celebrated if you will in literature. So, I think that articles about walking are very valuable because they will maybe encourage other people to do it or simply to recognize something that they already do. I think that there's a lot of people out that that walk for leisure. I'm now, suddenly, I don't know why this is surfacing now, but I recall participating in several walks, there's a group here in NYC, this was before I [met Dominique-?], it must have been, there's a group called Shore Walkers here in the city and the man's name is Cy Adler, I don't know how I'm remembering all of this, but he runs this org. and they have this series of walks where you just kind of show up and join in and someone's there to provide sort of a commentary and a tour pointing out milestones along the way, but they just do these walks and I recall going on two maybe three or them when I first got to NY. And, I'm sure this org. is still around, but it was, they do this Great Saunter every year in which they circumnavigate all of Manhattan along it's shore line. So, I'm sure, if he's still around which he probably is because he'll live forever because he's walking all the time, but Cy Adler was his name and his group "Shore Walkers," it's, they're just these kind of folks who are promoting walking as this activity. [Did you make it all the way around?] I don't believe that I ever did the Great Saunter as that's called. I went on two or three other long walks, one of which I think was in Long Island City which is just across the river in Queens from here. There's just so much to see because, you know, the Waterfront is a part of our city that's sort of ever being sort of rediscovered and that kind of thing just like in every city, in that it used to be the place where 'we'll put the highway over there on the waterfront cause nobody goes there.' But now at this point Waterfront property is just an amazing commodity even in this market. And it used to be difficult to walk around the Waterfront in various sections of the city,



but what's happening, the city as it's developed more and more they've actually built this beautiful park along the west-side right along the water and other places where they are trying to foster public access along the waterfront, because nothing goes together like walking or cycling or jogging and being along a beautiful place like a river or what have you. So, I think these things are, it's funny, it's as if, sometimes things are advanced and you don't even know it, like you don't realize that by providing public access or making a link between-there's a path here and a path here and you link them up, all the sudden the real estate values in that part of Manhattan started to inch up because who wouldn't want to live near this really terrific park where you can now bike or jog or walk from Battery Park all the way to 59<sup>th</sup> street and there it links up with a whole 'nother park and then there's Riverside Park, you can go all the way to the George Washington Bridge because of this, and people, and people are doing it. [Chicago is a lot like that as well, with the Lakefront property and there are bike paths and {you fade out}] I've never been to Chicago, I want to go [it's a beautiful city] I want to go. I was there once for a funeral and that's it.

[Maybe you don't observe people walking very much, but... can you tell anything about a person from their walk? and if so, what?] I don't know, I mean. I guess that I probably could if I noticed more, if I took the time, I mean it's, I mean people come into my field of vision and then they disappear and I think that they then disappear from my mind unless they're particularly striking or beautiful or something like that, but um, I do notice um, that when you go to different neighborhoods of the city, the people can be different. I have found, if I'm walking, on one of my projects there's an architect that's part of the development team, and their office is south of 14<sup>th</sup> street in what is probably kind of a 'fashionable' neighborhood and I walk to a meeting from here down to there in the morning, let's say for a 9am meeting and I'm struck by the, the women that I see coming out of apartment buildings in that neighborhood are extremely stylish, very well dressed, very stylishly dressed. I have no idea where they work; they obviously live in that neighborhood, they're walking to the corner hailing cabs or they are walking toward the subway or what have you, perhaps even just walking to work. But, it's, they are well dressed and going somewhere where it probably means something to be well-dressed and stylish, so my guess would be fashion industry or media or what have you. If you walk on the upper-east side along Park avenue, where it becomes, where it's residential, you certainly see some very well dressed and well mannered people. And, um so, I certainly notice that. In this neighborhood around here, because of the huge train station that's down below, there's this constant sea of people bubbling up from underground, and coming from, the trains come in from NJ, they come in from Long Island as I do, and they come from, and Amtrak comes from the north. So, it is such a hodgepodge of people, it's just this melting pot, this mix of people, and then when you get into certain neighborhoods then it becomes much more, people become I guess more similar in some respects, styles of dress and this kind of thing. And that is something I certainly notice because, as a colleague once pointed out to me-we had a meeting at, sort of over by Park Av South sort of North of Union Square, over that way and there's fancy shops and fancy restaurants, and a colleague of mine said 'gosh the people are so much better looking over here!' So, that I've noticed, styles of dress and that sort of thing. But I don't know how many of those people were walking for leisure, I really don't know. So...

[Describe, you mentioned your walk from here to 14<sup>th</sup> and back, and that may be your favorite walk, but if it's not, describe your favorite walk, or a memorable walk]. I think my favorite walk,

that I do on a regular basis, is probably from here down all the way to around, there's um Christopher street. You get on 8<sup>th</sup> ave. and you go to 14<sup>th</sup> street, that's part of my regular walk, but then from there, from 8<sup>th</sup> ave, from 14<sup>th</sup> street south, 8<sup>th</sup> ave. kind of turns and parallels the shore line of Manhattan, cuz that's when it sort of cuts in as you go south, and it turns and it becomes, at one point it becomes Hudson street. And it suddenly becomes even less dense of a neighborhood, and there are playgrounds and little sort of vest pocket parks and little restaurants and little shops. And I would do this walk sometimes in the afternoon, after work, and it's when the shops are just or the restaurants are just starting to, you know maybe there's one or two patrons but there's obvious activity, waiters and waitresses walking around getting things going. It all looks so inviting, cuz, in this light, now, I love, I love the autumn and then into the early part of the winter because it's dark in the city early. So it's that stretch from like 8<sup>th</sup> Ave. and 14<sup>th</sup> street down to Christopher street, where it just, it just feels like, it's like a part of the city I feel like you could call home. And I think I really, really love that. And there's, you know, back before it was getting dark early, there were kids on the street with their parents and this kind of thing, the playgrounds were full. I just love that stretch, but especially around this part of the year. And I've only been able to do it a couple of times since my operation, since my knee operation. So, there's just something about the light, and the traffic is sort of less intense right in there. And um, because 8<sup>th</sup> avenue is this, you know, main thoroughfare heading north, but when you go south of 14<sup>th</sup> street it's a little bit less intense. The neighborhood is lower density, it's more sort of home-like, that you feel like you could live right around there. And, friends of mine did live in that general neighborhood [several?] years ago and so I became familiar with it then and even now it's my favorite, you know one of my favorite areas to walk around. [It sounds lovely, I think I have actually walked down in that area, it's quite quaint] It is, it is, it's very

[interesting smaller buildings] That's right, it is [old structures, residential structures] Yes! And I um, a few months back an old friend of mine from college who I, actually who I met in London we went to school there together, she came in to the city and we met up for dinner in that neighborhood and sat in the window seat of this lovely Italian restaurant that has since closed [oh no] and um, I'm waiting to see what will open in its place. But Katharine and I sat there and just like had this catching up and talking about all sorts of things and enjoying amazing food and wine and able to look out the window and people walking by and this kind of thing and it was just this really great NY moment and so, that is one of my, I think that's one of my favorite areas to walk around in, but that walk along down to about Christopher street. [Nice, I think I'm going to go do it] Yeah, you should.

[Anything to wrap up, anything you want to add or?] Just that I love walking and I'm worried about what hurting my knee and trying to recover means for it because the surgeon the orthopedist did say 'you might want to rethink walking so much, um because, you might want to try you know, mixing it with some lower impact activity.' And the thought of getting a stationary cycle and putting it in my basement and riding it once a day instead of walking is just awful! I mean, it's so much more to me than just the exercise, that the thought that because of what I did to my knee means that there's trouble ahead for this activity, that's awful. So, I don't know, we'll have to see.

[I'm thinking of another question as you say it like that... What's most meaningful to you about the walking then and conversely what you lose?] I think I would lose the romance with wherever I am, you know that connection, you know, that I'm part of it and it's part of me, and, um

enjoying what I see with my eyes when I'm doing it. And so if I were forced to just, you know, exercise in another way, I would really miss that. So, I don't think I'll give it up, I think it may be, like a risk um worth taking. It's not like I'm, yeah um balancing it out, I'm still going to keep walking. Maybe not as frequently [and it brings to mind, there's so many things now you can do virtually, you know, you can take a virtual walk] I certainly could [in neighborhoods, and see. What would be, you know like, I was in this class once and we talked about 'is going to a place online travel or is looking at a place online, walking?'] I would say not, because you're gonna miss, and I'm sure that someone could recreate all these things, um, but I would miss the seeing people, I would miss the company of the people I was with. I would miss um, the smells, you know from shops and things like that. I don't know if you can easily recreate [{laughter}... I don't think you could] And, no matter what, I mean, I just would never think that, whatever headgear they could invent where like you'd actually, you'd turn, or whatever I see, it's never going to duplicate the experience, I mean it's just never going to. Um, it's like being anywhere in the world or in this country and seeing a pizza place that says 'NY style pizza' and I go in and I eat it, and even if it's so incredibly true to pizza you can get in NY, you're still not in NY. [laughter] I mean, Chicago style pizza same thing [yes!] I'm always very wary of that kind of thing. Although, and which is very funny to have that opinion of something like a walking tour online, because I actually feel like there are activities I engage in, in which I feel like I do, I am traveling the world or traveling this country by what I'm doing; specifically, I'm a big beer aficionado. I like to seek out all manner of different styles of beer and different types of beer. and I think of beer as a very historic, a beverage with a lot of history behind it different and different styles that date back you know hundreds of years and styles of beer that are so tied to certain geographic locations. It's like you can't call, it's like with wine, there are certain grapes that are only grown in certain regions, to be truly authentic. Same thing with different beers, so I will drink a beer for some place that I've either visited before or even someplace I've never been and feel like I am traveling the world in that way. But I know nothing would ever, ah um, could ever compare to the actual being in that place and drinking that beer, but I figure, right now with two little kids I'm not going to be able to make it to too many places in terms of traveling so I sort of live vicariously through different beers and different wines as well. So, but I really think that nothing beats being in a place to truly experience it. And, I look forward to the next big walk I take wherever it may be, you know, here in the city or or somewhere else, um you know abroad. I look forward to the time when my kids will be able to um really enjoy walking and they're five and seven now, so we don't get all that far without, you know, the complaints [right, laughs]. My son, actually can go a lot farther than my daughter, he's the older one. But, I just enjoy walking so much and I look forward to continuing. I'm not gonna stop. [good for you]

## APPENDIX K: INTERVIEW-LS100019-LEE

[Ok, so nice of you to agree to talk with me], Oh, no problem [I really appreciate it. Just if you would, sort of tell me how you came to do the Songlines{?} Project]

Um, It had its origin in a visit to NY by my mother and my niece. My mother takes her grandchildren to visit me when they turn 11 as a coming of age ritual [laughing, oh that's great] Well she did it for the oldest one and then she felt she had to do it for the other five or the other four as they ... and the third nibbling was coming by and she was sort of a she likes to read, she's a reader, and so I thought I could show her, sort of the literary sites of Greenwich village and uh, but I couldn't find like a guidebook that had everything that I wanted on it, so I started taking these guidebooks and making lists of addresses from them thinking I could like use them as a list [to show them] and as I was doing this, I started thinking, this list could be a website and I got the idea of linking them crosswise so you could sort of wander through the website like you were wandering the streets. That was like the summer of 2001 [ok] and in Sept of that year of course, the World Trade Center was destroyed, and it really gave me this, {?} a refreshed love for NY and a sense of the fragility of the city. And it seemed like, I really sort of threw myself at the project at that point. I think the first webpage went up by Oct. 2001. [ok, that was pretty soon after] yeah. It seemed like a way to, you know, preserve NY, Kind of keep it safe, not just from Al Qaeda, but from the forces of development that are constantly erasing and rewriting NY, and you know there's a feeling that there's always a golden age before now [yeah] and you know it is, people do have a feeling that, in some ways it's true [mmhm] I was thinking about the Village Voice and when I first saw the Village Voice in 85, I thought, oh what a great publication it is, but at that point, people were already like 'oh, the Village Voice is like, so far from what it used to be,' and I was like, oh yeah right, but you know, damned if it didn't really started to go downhill from like 85, and now it's really pretty terrible. And it's really gotten to the point where {I?} don't even really pick it up anymore because it's so like, unworthwhile, it's not worth the effort of bending down and carrying it [wow, that's sad because it was quite a literary...] you can really see how like it {???} and I worry that the Village Voice is NYC in miniature [ahh] that ... We've always been a mixture of rich and poor, of commerce and art and there's always these tensions in NY that are kind of being erased. There's always been Gentrification in NY, like neighborhoods changing from bad to good and that creates a lot of spaces that are inhabited by interesting people. [absolutely] and In large part... that's like the point of the songlines is that a lot of interesting people have lived here [ok] I was doing {horatio??palatial?} street in the village which I was doing because someone had sent me {between 537 and 605 problems hearing... something about the restaurants go back to check???} BLANK lived there } a bunch of... on this one block, there's like three major writers that lived there at various times and it's not like oh, getting the go to {blank} street to see where {?} lived, it's like an address that people lived at. [they put plaques on em at least some of them? No?] I don't think so, most, it's very rare for, because we are so blasé in NY. You know. You'll see an occasional plaque. I know I know that {a woman's name Laura Katherine?} has a plaque [I know I've been by her place] one of her houses has a plaque, she has like four different places [o, I've been by one of her places]. There's a plaque on a house, a very elaborate, beautiful plaque on Irving place, on the Washington Irving house and the problem is that Washington Irving never lived there. [haha] It was like, a dentist named Irving had lived there and Irving had sometimes stayed with a nephew that lived near by and so people got mixed up between the [ok], but so you can see... this the Washington... and

you can find this in guidebooks, [that's cool] The Washington Irving House. [that's interesting] I think Oscar Wilde used to live next door. [wow] There's no plaque though (laughs). [That's something I noticed when I was in Paris when I walked if someone well known had lived there, they'd put a plaque on the wall] Yeah, I sometimes have this fantasy of writing letters to addresses and saying [you wonder if they even know?] Yeah, that's what I wonder. Like, did you know that so and so used to live here?

[and how, where do you get your information? I mean various places...] Well, there's like there's a pile of books in my living room and there's a few that like really, like there's one that's called *all around the town* which is sort of similar to like songlines, it's like street by street. [ok] like, interesting things that have happened on the streets of Manhattan, um there's a book called *the streets where they lived* [ok] there's a book called *star walks* which is hilarious cause, do you read the onion? [yes] There's they do this Celebrity Columnist, it's just like that, it's just that voice. Except probably more accurate than that. talking about where famous people live in Manhattan. The AAA guide is a good source for architecture. There's another architectural guidebook that I use all the time. There's a book that, um what's the good one? there's a book called *notorious NY* and one called *infamous Manhattan* and one of them is much better than the other, but a source for crime. There's a book on literary new york which has a lot of the literary spots. There's a book on Gay New York called *stepping out* that's tours of, uh, ... you know, it goes on, a bunch of books and the uh, I've been using online stuff for trying to find what's there now is a challenge, I like to put that in because it gives people a landmark like they can remember passing by this store and know that, that's where Andy Warhol lived [uh huh]. And it's harder to, cause most of that stuff doesn't end up in books, like I was using NY magazine's "soho shopping guide to find addresses on green street. uh, there's a website called metrobot, which is actually, I sometimes wonder if it was inspired by songlines because it's actually very similar except it's automatically generated, and it's like, its similar in the sense that [uh huh] each page is a street so you have to like click more often to get to different sections of the street and you can click at different intersections to turn it's basically the same format and it's like a webcrawler that finds addresses on the web and recognizes them and [puts them in] yeah where they're supposed to be. It's pretty inaccurate because there's a lot of old addresses on the web, but it does like... I actually don't get out much. which is the irony of it [that is ironic] especially uh, I became a father like almost five years ago [congratulations] and I'm looking forward to, the day's not far off, I'm looking forward to when Eden and I can as an activity wander around and songline together. But it's not there yet, she has to be carried too much for one thing.

[sounds like you've got a real historical, almost a cataloguing kind of objective] yeah [with songlines, but what's walking have to do with it all?] Well it's I do envision the ultimate use of it, and it's something I don't know much about, but I have seen people with the songlines on a portable device like a pda. I mean, an iphone can contact the web right? [yes it can] so like to be able to use it like a portable guidebook as you wander around that seems like the best way to be able to use it is to like walk around and because it's the tie you know, and I think it's a beautiful city for walking and, is walking your sort of academic field? [It is, my dissertation is on walking and what meaning there might be in it] the uh, it's um, its a city that is kinda walking scale, the alot of cities you walk a long time and you haven't really gotten anywhere, that are really like sort of car cities, like you don't have a strip of, I mean one of the reasons I love buildings like this is cuz you have space on the bottom floor for a store and they're narrow um {?} kind of

like, I'm kind of thinking of Jane Jacobs, you know her [I know her work] of and she talks about how you need old buildings for new ideas, and it's true, if you see a new building go up and so like a big space for retail on the ground floor and some place preppy always goes in, because only someplace preppy can afford to have that much space on ...whereas when you've got tenements or row houses, it has like a reasonable amount of space that a you know a smallish establishment can you know this place doesn't have to do like TGI Friday's business [right] so you can have, because they're so narrow, you can have 8 businesses on a block [yes] that can offer different things and that walking by them is an experience whereas walking by a strip mall is not an experience because you, for one thing, it's too big, it takes too long to sort of get past the Toys R Us and it's just not interesting because it's a Toys R Us and it's like the Toys R Us all over the US [that you saw in the last in the last city you were in] And I really like uh, I hate Giuliani, and one of the many reasons I hate him is he liked chain stores. [aww] He thought chain stores were uh, I just don't understand that, I know that New Yorkers, I just read something odd about 14th street, and how like, it was like an article about real estate that I read in the NY Times, that's actually a source, good source for songlines, and this woman was talking about how, you know, instead of the crappy stores we have now, we might be able to get some chain stores in and like that would be somehow uh, you know, it's a nice street, it's funky, it's getting less funky, but it was sort of like the low end shopping district [yeah, I think I] sort of like if you were a bargain hunter [think I've been down that street actually] and to think that this would be better if it were like more like every suburban mall in America [it's so mundane]. It's, you know, I sometimes it's hard to get in these people's heads. I did a school tour, we were looking for a school to get Eden at, and uh, I had heard, we talked to other parents in the schools and you get such conflicting reports from them. And the first school we went to, you know, They were like 'I didn't like the building, you know, it seemed...' and I went there and it's this lovely building [oh wow] that's like an old NY school building and it's like filled with children's art that is gorgeous and so lovingly presented, like the teachers obviously took great pride in their what their students had done and put them up in these displays and like and just like packed it in{?}. [nice] You know um, There was this private school downtown like literally across the street from the stock exchange it was not only private, it was a for profit school. And for somebody like me who had gone had like, that's the alternative to going to public school is to go to this, and it's called "Clairmont Academy," and it's in a former bank and apparently it's gorgeous, it's like a gilded age bank, like back when the vanderbilts... and so we were talking like how, like, how's the light, I thought this, you know, it's hard to imagine sending your kid to school in a bank [an odd thing to wrap your head around] that people can you know, find NY improved by having a Starbucks, down the street, Edith Wharton's birthplace is in the Flatiron building, and it's a Starbucks [no way] it is. Yeah! [both laugh] I'm glad there's not a plaque, because it would be [that would be so sad] embarrassing for her [yes it would be] (he laughs). [So I guess since you've become a father, what kind of walking are you doing now?] I work on 27th street and mid 6th and I live on 11th near Av A. and most nights I walk home. I try to vary my walking so I get to see different things. The uh and that's uh if you look at the songlines you'll see more detail between 27th and 11th street than in the rest of the [uh huh] and that was like the first chunk I did. I originally grew up on 28th street from like Houston to 28th was my original area and it's changed walking for me, I'm much more aware of my surroundings than I used to be because I'm thinking about 'what's worth noting' [uh huh, yeah] and uh I don't know, I might be exaggerating how oblivious I was before, but I feel like I notice architecture far more and I have much deeper feelings about it like I really, like uh, so love certain buildings and

am repulsed by certain buildings [uh huh] there's a the Chelsea Savoy is on the corner of 7th and 23rd and it's just this box, it's kind of hideous. I believe... If someone writes and complains and say's I'm too negative I usually change it. But uh, [laughs {at a gesture he made or picture he showed?}] I thought, no, you can't put this... But bad architecture tends to be much larger [laughs] and uh, that's sort of a characteristic of it is it's like [stales{?}] yeah and it's like an expanse of land and like the places that are designed to have a Blockbuster video on the ground floor tend to be no more interesting vertically than, and it's sort of like, uh I the sort of small scale sort of individual building and, you know it used to be you couldn't build a building over 6 stories in NY unless you had an elevator, I think you still can't you need an elevator. And it used to be that you couldn't afford an elevator, so it was defacto six stories, which is kind of like, it keeps this thing on a human scale [yeah, you can do that, fifth floor walkups] I live on the fourth floor and it probably keeps me in better shape than I otherwise would be. So, I think I mentioned already, they're doing a rezoning of the East Village [you mentioned that yes] and uh, I see these, it's supposed to be sort of a compromise in that they are rezoning the Aves and not the streets and I like, you know, walk down 2nd{?} ave and there's like just these beautiful strips of uh tenements that are like you know and I actually much of the distinction there's the tenements that are sort of the plain, plainer and the apartments buildings that are sort of ornate from the and some are just really, I can't believe that people don't look at them and think 'that looks great' [uh huh] and not only does it look great, but it creates a community by its you know it creates spaces for small businesses it creates and the um you know NY is, a lot of people want to live here, it's a great place to live, which is why the rents are so expensive and one of the few things that keeps people out is that the, they are not like up to modern standards, people have come to expect like a certain size of apartment which is really like more apartment than you need [ok], but people expect to have, and especially the people with those expectations can't live in a tenement because it's just not or a walk up you know, it's just like which sort of like creates something besides money to select who gets to live in Manhattan [yeah] And that's important, [that is important] you know, like I feel like {?} I think it should be harder to buy a car than it is because I feel like, I think people who refuse to ride public transportation should live somewhere else, you know if you can't get on a subway there's plenty of cities you can live in that don't have subways and you should live in them [exactly]. but you know if you replace the tenements with a high rise, which is the plan [wow] then you know, you'll be replacing the people who live there as well because you'll be inviting people in who uh, there's a new condo on my block that is this was of course the height of the housing bubble, which costs 900,000 a piece which is, this is the East Village, it's not the upper east side [yeah] it's a street that has some rats and [a little bit of everything] and I sort of hope to by alerting people to some of the history I hope to put some sand in the wheels of, I don't have a lot of illusions for how easy to be, like to put up a website to stop a developer from making a 100,000,000 profit on a building [right],

[you know and that they know, In that vein then, it sounds like you're hoping to have some sort of effect on valuing the aesthetic of the city] yeah [and from that perspective then, how would you describe what I'll call the 'walking culture' in NYC?] it is I'm always very gratified to hear that you printed out songlines. It took me a while to figure out how to print it out because if you don't do it right, it cuts off and you get like  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the sognlines there's a trick, [yeah, I know what you mean] but to hear the people have like, taken songlines, it's very cool [yeah] to give that sort of value added to the sort of the touring of the, I'm actually pro tourists, I like tourists [ok]

(laughs) [that's good to know, so...] The uh I sometimes feel the urge to wave at tourbusses, but I resist it.

30:34 3.25 hrs so far

[do you think tourists walk more than the people who live here or what kind of comparison?] I think that tourists walk more recreationally. [ok] I do think ... Walking is like a form of transportation in NY in a way that is different from a lot of other places. I think I remember reading the number of people in LA who had not walked, I don't know, 1/4 a mile in the past year or something it was like 50% {?} or something [wow] I know, I was like, 'really,' and it's like you have a subway stop at 14<sup>th</sup> and then one at 23<sup>rd</sup> and if a bus doesn't {?} you get off there you can walk it [you don't need a stop at every corner] yeah, and so I guess I, in the introduction to songlines I started talking about how I feel like people don't pay much attention to their surroundings and I was sort of writing about myself there you know, the that I didn't pay enough, that I thought I didn't pay enough attention and I guess I feel like its this whole interesting moment {?}

{very tough here, know I missed some. suggest you listen at 32:25 to 33:20 or so} you know, it took me {???} tourist remind me to look up {?} [I know, yeah, I do that pretty regularly] (laughs) It's a beautiful city. and a lot of the beauty is at the skyline of the {???} these old landmark buildings and you can still do what you want with the first floor, like the floor off the street you can modernize and [yeah] retail, and so the first floor there's often not much to look at there's uh you're just looking at the fringes bows {?} [oh yeah, beautiful ornate old architecture] You know the phase when putting faces {?} on buildings was like vogue and I was like whoa, I don't think I ever noticed this before and there's a lot of like, kind of ordinary apartment buildings with this weird kind of satyr face or education man or ... weird mythological creatures roaming around {?} and it's like there's some sort of you feel like they're they're trying to say something and there's this cast of characters on this building and you have no idea who they are but {???} [absolutely I totally agree with you and often times they are mythological creatures like gargoyles and different, there's definitely a message there] so, I guess I feel like, a lot of Nyers are not there's a church a block away from me that was done by the same guy that did St. Patrick's Cathedral [oh wow] you know actually, I didn't know that I was just struck by the church and I stopped by and knocked on the door and I think I woke up the priest and he came out all grumpy, not an old guy either he was too young to be so grumpy [laughs] and I said do you know when this church was built and he was like it's {?} old [thanks a lot, laughing, he had no appreciation] and I think he should, and that building was done by one of the foremost church architects since rembrant {?} [oh my gosh] and he was very interested in reviving sort of {?} church architecture {?} and there's um, chimneys and underneath what looked like leaves, but if you stare at it, it's actually a face made out of leaves I learned later that is not an uncommon motif. like it's like {or not like! not sure} it has some kind of pagan significance or something ... that particular church. {missed several words} I just feel like the songlines are for tourists or for a resident, and I sort of feel like I guess the tourists with the encounter the {?} the other audience is like the house of Rah {?} is on your block and you should know about it. and I like to you know I mentioned that a lot of people had fun people on their street {?} on their street and I suppose {again, missed several words 38:25} [that's very cool] I guess it's for walkers and not walkers. yeah people do they use it if they are writing an historical novel and want some local color. What do the situationalists call it? [{?}] Yeah sometimes I think of it in that context, the



that you can choose any path through the streets, though it doesn't always work [what do you mean?] it's tough to get the websites to line up right, it's all done by hand and I often notice if the link isn't up right, people won't be able to. I think of it as a Memory palace, have you heard of it [no?] a memory palace is a technique it's a mnemonic technique that some medieval philosopher came up with where you create an imaginary house and you fill it with things that represent like you're trying to remember the names of planets so you put figures representing the planets and you apparently you can stock your memory palace chock full of stuff and it begins to interact so I think you could use the songlines in like an elective (?) way by turning right down streets and the thing that comes on the next street will be meaningful in some way, and that's why in part why I wish I had a version (?) I could carry around with me to marry the virtual NY and the real NY in a more direct walking way.

[so, if you think about the people who value songlines for what it is and you obviously have some investment in it, what value does it have?] there's like a I think you recognize the fan letter working with a kindred spirit, cuz there's a quality of sort of valuing... (?) change in time and the eclecticism of NY that's part of, NY is like history but not like Williamsburg. It's not like the things like preserving it the way it was forever and making it into a sort of museum ..., there's people who like difference and people who like clarity, a (?) certain, politics maps neatly onto the (?) on the left people who like variety, people who like homogeneity tend to be conservative and it's like ... it's not for nothing that like the thing that comes on the next street will be meaningful in some way, It's really hard to say what a typical NYer looks like there's really no such animal. that's kind of what I'm feeling about it. I think that's something that songlines has actually come from (?) I love places that have two or more equally unrelated associations... like there's a on St Mark's place there's a kind of Punch Building Circle (?) from vaudeville and it was a repertoire theater in the 60s for Yoko Ono with (?) and like 150 years earlier there was Jean Severs Cooper's house [what threads of continuity do you find in that] Well Cooper was an artist and he was a literary type and it was a time when writing novels was a kind of unusual thing to do so he was sort of like a bohemian, a literary type and lived in parts of the city where literary firsts {??} far down west 23<sup>rd</sup> st from each other. [far down] {???? missed a bunch} now its small dress makers, bird stuffers {??}

[Has it changed that much do you think? those descriptions are, I think relevant] That's the worry is that, it's like I think Greenwich Village is the place for Bohemians, for you know, like Tom Paine lived there (?) as far back as the revolution type days and it was an immigrant neighborhood in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and Emma Goldman lived there and you know Eugene O'Neill and Edna St. Vincent Millay and the 20s bohemians and after, there was the Beat but you know it's not a bohemian neighborhood anymore its' like (?) and like (?) something million dollars ...} and so it's kind of reached the end of its life as a sort of you know I think it was um Stomp to (?) declare the close of bohemian Washington Square arch made a proclamation there and its gone its fallen and Bohemia is being sort of chased around Manhattan and it's still, the East Village, while clearly not what it used to be, it's a great place to raise kids. I have a you know, the (?) playground and it's a highly diverse group of people the fathers do as much looking after the kids as the mothers do, it's actually pretty unusual [yeah] and in part it's why a lot of people who are like actors and photographers or, it's hard to not have some kind of lucrative job to live there, but they're non traditional (?) I'm in the park, (?) it's a ... It's not by chance that you have a community like that, you have to plan for the {??} encounter and you won't have the same kind of people (?) the rent control law, which in some ways is less than provisional (?) I've lived in the same apartment for 16 years which, I have to, there's no other apartment in the neighborhood

that I can afford. [ok] Which is in some ways that's not great, but it also creates more stability in the community [right] people tend to stay put because they have to. [so if you moved out and they rented it to someone else, they could bump up the rent?] yes, but not to market rate. They wanted to do that, they tried to do that but they. Instead of that, what they got was that 2,000 {?} it keeps it controlled and at that time, my {?} so I could handle 2,000, but you don't have to be a psychic to know that in not too long apartments are going to stop selling {?} and we're starting to get to that point now and unless they change the law fairly soon, there won't be many rent for life apartments they'll all be graduated um... I figure I have five more years before they kick me out for someone who can afford to pay twice as much which is really... I feel I feel like the songlines are kind of devote yourself to a place you kind of... Joyce wrote about Dublin {??? 53:46-53:57. Something about leaving Ireland?}

[That's true. So, what's most important to you about walking and, particularly as it relates to your project] I guess sort of it is sort of it is really sort of organized around walking. It's uh, the whole thing is paths and its not ... I've said {?} the avenues go south to north, which means you are walking because if you were in a car [yeah] you can only go south on {?} it isn't like a {?} if I'd done like a more traditional map you know where you could click on ... like I think, there's actually something called Mr. Belly's Neighborhood {?} which is a little more literary you click on a map, like they've got an aerial photograph [like you click on the map?] yeah, and little stories come up, or more like personal stories of historic people, you know, certain figures, but... this {songlines} really is like, it's based on walk, the {kinship??} its origin having a planned walking tour for my mother and my niece. But, it's designed so you can sort of walk around it. [Ok, that I understand. When I think of walking I think there's something unique about it, because you could take a tour bus, take a walking tour, but uh] The seat {?} of it is also [ok, alright] um in a, the tour bus you can you have to read it learn it at bus speed, whereas the amount of detail, you don't get so much detail for a tourbus really. You get a, designed for someone to be traveling at a ... also, you can stop and absorb [sort of a thoughtful pace then] yeah. And again, it wouldn't work in a ... super {??? 58:02-58:05} way. [It would be a nightmare I think (both laugh)] You know, I'd love to see a London Songlines [yeah, London absolutely] if someone were to copycat me I'd be thrilled. [how about Paris?] yeah, Paris. [can you compare NY? Have you traveled to some of those other cities] I've never been to London, I've been to Dublin. But when I was in, Dublin itself I was {?} is really and when I was there I did wander around a bit and stumbled upon Bram Stoker's house [laughs]. But most of my experience of Ireland was in a car. I've been to Athens, which has a you know one thing you need for the songlines is addresses and if your golden age was within the era of Socrates... [yeah, no house numbers (both laugh)] yeah. It is a grid, um, I think drawing the songlines is very challenging because ... one of the things that lends NY to the songlines format is that it is very perpendicular and when it's not it's kind of it messed me up a little bit. [yeah] So I feel like I'm still learning to deal with the funky intersections [ok] But uh, and it's like in ... Streets are always changing names in London [I know, they do that in Paris too] they seem like people studying for the London cab driver exam and it's really like, it would be a lot of work to memorize. and a good thing is like even if anyone who wanted to drive a cab they just gave people like {???? from 1:00:40-1:00:48} [Yeah, really] So what's the question? [I was just curious about, uh I was just thinking about your songlines {or fondness?} in NYC. Aside from that, what does time have to do with it, because you mentioned time a little bit ago] yeah, it's ... it's a sense of like the depth of time and like there's a sort of like horizontal time and vertical time, it's like the time of typically walking the street and then the time of you can go

from, and it's the same address, from like Thomas Payne to you know, 50's Jazz artists, and a sense of... NY it's like it's a commercial city and unfortunately we don't tend to respect the past so much and there was a building where George Washington was sworn in as the first president [yeah] and right just past there there's like three other major historic events that happened in this building and it was torn down in 1820. {or 1920?...thinking like it's?} An old building that... It was replaced it's now called Federal Hall and what Federal Hall it actually is is like a it's like the affairs office or something or customs house or something government commercial building it has to do with like commerce regulation or it looks pretty executive kind of classical style pillars and stuff and it probably looks more like Washington should have been sworn in there than the original building [probably] and the building where the Supreme Court first met in was in NY and it's gone of course it was made out of wood and it burned to the ground. During the revolution {?} and so the very oldest the oldest building in NY is from 1750 or something. It's a mansion up in the upper east side. And St Paul's Church on Broadway is, depending on if you take the date of starting or completion was also built... and they had to rebuild the roof they had a big fire, stamping out the and they were threatened on 9/11 as well [That's right, I remember seeing, they've got some placards up]. It's tree roots there was this tree tipped over and protect the building from debris and this artist that specializes in tree root sculpture duplicated the tree. [yeah, I was down there last time I was here]. It's not very old. When I was in Ireland, I stayed at a hotel because it was near the airport and it was a nice hotel and it was 350 years old [yeah] and that was really not a selling point for the hotel [yeah, that's great] It's not that uh... in a little town that was named... it was, we just stopped to get gas and she explained the name of the town and how it's thought to derive from the word for cave but really it comes from the name of a Celtic god and that no one has worshiped this god for 1500 years and so this village which is a little village with a gas station is at least 1500 years old and has had the same name that long and it's just like no different like every other village that you pass by... so in NY we don't have that kind of history and it seems all the more important to hold onto the kind that we do have, it's like a handful of buildings from the 18th century in NY. There's not really {?} from the Civil War. So, {?} from 1:07:55-1:08:10} On third avenue, I {?} noticed, there's a pretty big hole in the ground. [yeah] they took out two or three buildings that were built in the 1840s and I remember them they were, the brick from that era had a certain quality to it, sort of a kidney red to it. Whatever they put there is not going to be worth sacrificing so it's important. The landmarks as I said{ or association?} it's really kind of useless so I sort of have this feeling that unless, they're very, because, it's about real estate, they do care about architecture and if something has some demonstrable role in the history of architecture then they might think about {?} but if it is, I get a real sort of , {?} a building that was built for the rich {might think about landmarking it?} but a building for the poor and landmarks because they are built for the rich, landmark buildings are probably worth more as is than they would be to replace, where, like this building, and it's probably safe because it's in between {?} buildings, but if you had a row of these buildings, they'd be worth more dead than alive.

[Well, our time's about up, I appreciate your being here, any final thoughts about something I haven't asked you about that you think I should know?] Tell me a little bit about your ....

[Actually it was, it's really been a little bit in coming. My PhD will be in Leisure Studies and like three or four semesters ago I took a class in which we read some things about consumer culture and one of the things I ran across was Walter Benjamin's ideas on Flaneurie and walking the sort of leisurely stroller in commercial leisure settings, so it really intrigued me because it seems like there's been a lot more awareness of the value of walking in my field from a very

practical point of view, from a health and wellness point of view] Uh huh [but I thought, well there's something to be learned from the literary perspective as well] right, yeah [so I did some more reading about it and ran across an essay by Balzac on walking, called "Theory of Walking," which had never been translated into English] huh [so I decided to take that up and translate it into English] sure [I mean I'm not a professional translator, but I spent 3 months in Paris and I looked up some of the resources from, so the language of 1833 and of meaning {?} and found, came up with 12 axioms of walking] laughs [ok, from that I started thinking, there's been a lot of writing about walking from social commentary, meaningmaking, sort of philosophical,] yeah [way of thinking about it so it intrigued me to the point where I thought well there is something very meaningful about I'm walking myself, and the essay that Balzac wrote was written in a large City, I wanted to interview walkers in NYC to bring it to today to see if there's some clarity, themes that are familiar] yeah [from 1833 to now, so very much that historical perspective how we can learn something from history and that we can find meaning in sort of the slow time of walking] right [so, that's sort of how I came to it] Yeah, you know the songlines name comes from the aboriginal [yeah] and I read the book songlines, I must have read it shortly before, you know around the same time I started the project and I was struck by the landscape has a sort of had deep meaning for the aborigine because they walk it and they sing it and it would not be the same if they just walked it and it would not be the same if they just sang it, sort of the tying of the story and the landscape together it's pretty inspiring and the feeling like you could get that same, {well not exactly the same?}, but some degree of the {?} take meaning from our landscape as you walk it. But you know I could have done that, there's a lot of different ways to organize it, a timeline or there's different ways you could put it together basically any way you want, but it's the because, and it's not necessarily a literal walking, it's your mentally {?} walking. The codas are a new thing to songlines and people suggested this early on and I resisted the idea, I wasn't very excited about the idea of putting in photographs, they're from flicker [ok] and in a way it's it makes it more collaborative which could be why I resisted it because it's not like 100% [yeah] me. Because it's to an extent based on what other people thought was worth photographing ... I've taken a few photographs and put them on flicker, but mostly found photographs and, I am very, I'm a little bit obsessive about it, I've been getting up at 6 in the morning checking on it, so I still feel, despite my obsession, I still feel a little bit of ambivalence about it because {at this point in time?} you don't have to see it, you don't have to be there, which I think you do, so I guess I've come to feel like it helps you connect the virtual experience with the actual street {???} and a lot of uh, the newer buildings in that people can tell you the names of in NYC if you are a New Yorker or or they have like a photo and they can say like oh, that building [yeah, connect] and the next time you go by it you can hopefully it brought something from your {?} pertinent to your walked life that you didn't have before. This was cool by the way [I have a copy for you...]